

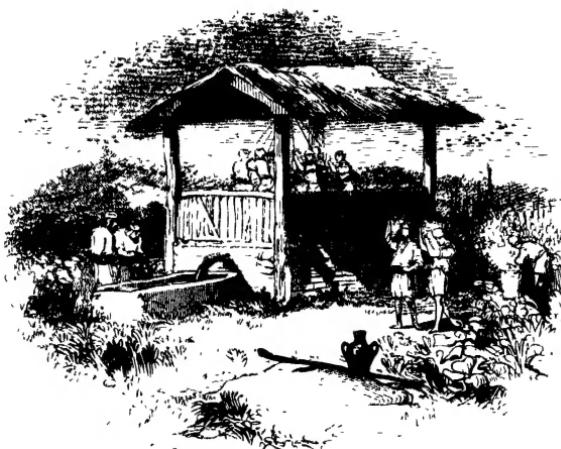
€ 1170

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED

ENGRAVINGS

DESIGNED FROM EXISTING AUTHORITIES.

SUBJECTS SELECTED FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.



EASTERN WINE-PRESS.

LONDON:
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;
Instituted 1799.

SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD; AND
BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

EL1170



PREFACE.

THE object of the present work is to present to the eye and to the mind of the reader, a correct description of Scripture facts, derived from the best authorities. It must be acknowledged, by all attentive readers of the Bible, that the paintings of the old masters, which have been so widely diffused, have often conveyed erroneous ideas. They do not accord with the idea of Oriental usages, etc., which we derive from the sacred Text, and often discover both ignorance and superstition, and that to such an extent as often to bewilder and mislead the youthful and uninformed mind. Hence it has been thought, that much instruction might be imparted to the reader through a medium, which will at once afford a truthful representation of Scripture facts and of Oriental manners. Such is the leading feature of this work.

In the Engravings, the reader has set before him scenes which cannot fail to be interesting to the mind of the true Christian. They are accompanied by brief accounts, derived from Scripture, of the events which they represent, and a short improvement of the subject.

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THE DEPARTURE OF REBEKAH TO BECOME THE WIFE OF ISAAC.

(GENESIS XXIV.)

THE Almighty gave his favoured servant, Abraham, a promise that his seed should be called in Isaac, the son of his old age, and of his beloved Sarah. This promise was not to be forgotten, and, accordingly, about three years after the death of Sarah, and when Isaac was about forty years of age, Abraham called his trustworthy servant, Eliezer of Damascus, and made him take a solemn oath that he would journey to the family of his brother Nahor, in Mesopotamia, and procure for him a wife from thence. At the same time he gave him complete authority to conclude the marriage.

Eliezer departed on this important mission with a train consisting of ten camels and a proper proportion of attendants. He carried with him also valuable presents for the damsel and her friends, it being customary in the East, not only to purchase the bride from her friends at a costly price, but to bestow upon herself rich presents.

How long Eliezer was performing his journey is not related. The sacred penman conducts him at once to the vicinity of Nahor's residence.

It was towards evening when Eliezer arrived in the vicinity of his master's family, and he immediately adopted those measures which seemed best calculated to ensure the object of his journey. As the hour was approaching at which the females were wont to come forth to draw water at the wells, and he knew that among them he might expect to see one suited to be the bride of his young master, he allowed his camels to kneel down in their usual posture of rest by the side of a well, and resolved to tarry there as one who desired leave to give them water.

Such was the human contrivance to which Eliezer resorted in order to accomplish the object of his mission. But he did not rest here. Like his master, Abraham, he knew that without a blessing from on high he could not hope to meet with success. Hence, while he was yet waiting by the side of the well, he breathed this touchingly simple prayer: "O Lord God of my

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master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master."

The prayer of Eliezer was heard and answered. While yet he was uttering it, some young women came to the well to discharge their evening duty. To one of these, who was distinguished by great beauty, his attention was attracted, and as she was returning from the well, with her pitcher on her shoulder, he ran to meet her, requesting that she would allow him to take a draught of water from her vessel. The damsel replied, "Drink, my lord;" and when he had done so, she said that she would give the camels drink likewise, and, so saying, she hastened again and again to the well, emptying her pitcher into the trough for that purpose. Eliezer seems to have looked upon this as an indication that the kind-hearted damsel was to be the bride of his master's son; whence, after observing her with an eye of wonder, and when the camels had done drinking, he took from his treasures a nose-jewel and a pair of bracelets, and presented them to her, asking at the same time whose daughter she was, and whether her father's house afforded room for him and his party to lodge. Her answer could not have been more gratifying to the ears of Eliezer. He was told that she was Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, one of the sons of Nahor; and when he heard it, he exclaimed, in the fulness of his heart: "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren."

As soon as Rebekah heard that the man to whom she was speaking was servant to Abraham, whose memory appears to have been fondly remembered by his relatives, she hastened home to tell the tidings. Nahor, it would seem, was dead, and, although Bethuel, the father of Rebekah, still lived, the management of affairs appears to have fallen into the hands of his son, Laban, who no sooner heard his sister's statement, and saw the presents which

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had been given to her, than he hastened forth, and brought Eliezer into the house. Arrived there, a meal was prepared for him and his companions, with the usual promptitude of Eastern hospitality. Eliezer, however, was too much interested in the result of his mission to sit down and eat before he had related his errand. This he did in a precise and simple narrative; and Laban, in his own name, and that of Bethuel, declared that the finger of a Divine Providence was so visible in the event that no objection could be raised against his proposition. He added: "Behold, Rebekah is before thee; take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken." Eliezer bowed his head in gratitude to God; and on the morrow, having first bestowed upon the elected bride and her brother and mother the presents which he had brought with him, he requested permission to return immediately with Rebekah. He was pressed to tarry a few days; but, as he persisted in his request, and Rebekah expressed her willingness to go at once, Laban dismissed her with this characteristic Oriental blessing: "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

In the East, the nurse is an influential person in the household of great men, and she often accompanies the young female she has nourished to the house of her husband. This is more frequently the case when her new abode is far distant from that of her parents, of which an example is afforded on this occasion. Rebekah's nurse and some of her damsels were sent with her, all mounted on camels, the whole group being under the direction of the trustworthy and pious Eliezer.

In the engraving prefixed to this article, which represents the departure of Rebekah, the more striking peculiarities of patriarchal life are vividly exhibited. The crouching camel, the free and picturesque costumes, the grave etiquette of ordinary occasions, and the hearty hospitality of the shepherd's tent, are placed before the reader; and they teach him, in their combination, by giving a right direction to his imagination, to conceive with truth the simple histories contained in that most ancient record of human action, the Book of Genesis. The engraving has been chiefly designed from the celebrated picture by Schopel, and dressed by him from the sketches of modern French travellers.

Rebekah and Eliezer journeyed onward; and one evening, as Isaac went out into the field to meditate, he discovered their

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advancing camels. He knew whose they were, and he walked on to meet them. As he approached, his destined bride observed him, and asked Eliezer who he was. She was informed that it was his master, and she immediately dismounted from her camel and enveloped herself in the veil of a bride. Isaac knew by this that the mission of his servant had been successful, and he was confirmed in it by the narration of Eliezer. He told him all that had taken place; and Isaac took Rebekah to the tent of his mother, Sarah, which belonged to her as the chief woman of the tribe, and he loved her, and she became his wife. Since the death of his mother, he had mourned her loss, but now he received comfort. God had taken from him one friend; but in his mercy he bestowed upon him another, lest he should be swallowed up with overmuch grief.

The circumstances of this expedition point the reader's attention to the superintending care of a Divine Providence. It was by the direction of the Almighty that Eliezer travelled onward, and he it was that crowned his mission with success. And what momentous consequences followed! The union of Isaac with Rebekah was not a transaction that concerned their happiness alone. The salvation of a guilty world was involved in the event. From Isaac not only an illustrious progeny was to descend, but One who should save his people from their sins, even the Lord Jesus Christ.



VEILED FEMALE OF THE EAST.



JACOB TENDING THE FLOCKS OF LABAN.

JACOB TENDING THE FLOCKS OF LABAN.

(GENESIS XXIX. AND XXX.)

THE aged patriarch, Isaac, who had long been afflicted with blindness, finding that he drew near the end of his pilgrimage on earth, called for Esau, his eldest son, and desired him to procure for him some of his favourite venison, and dress it, that he might eat; promising, afterwards to give him his blessing. Rebekah, the wife of Isaac, heard this request; and her love being fixed upon Jacob, her youngest son, she resolved to counteract the design of Isaac, by causing her loved-one to personate Esau. In this she was successful. She hastily dressed Isaac's favourite meat, put the skins of the kids upon Jacob's hands, and clothed him with the garments of Esau; in which disguise Jacob so effectually imposed upon his father, that, after he had partaken of the meat, he kissed him, and, in the spirit of prophecy, gave him his solemn blessing.

Now, Jacob had before obtained the birthright of Esau, and, as might be expected, therefore, this transaction widened this breach in their brotherly affection still more.

They stood aloof; the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder.

Esau, indeed, harboured revenge in his breast, and determined, when his father was dead, to put Jacob to death. His design was made known to Rebekah; and she persuaded Isaac to send Jacob to her brother Laban, at Padan-Aram, hoping that his absence, and time, would allay the fury of his brother Esau. Accordingly Jacob was sent away; and when he arrived at Padan-Aram he became shepherd to his uncle, serving him fourteen years for his two daughters, Leah and Rachel, and, afterwards, for the ringstraked, spotted, and speckled offspring of his numerous flocks of sheep and goats.

In such circumstances Jacob is represented in the drawing. The plain in the distance may be supposed to exhibit one of the fertile and pleasant tracts by which the desolate region of Mesopotamia Proper is skirted in the north and north-eastern part, where it was that Jacob fed the flocks of Laban for so many years. This region

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contains numerous rich pastures and pleasant hills, although the want of water prevents large portions of soil, naturally fertile, from being productive. The air is very pure throughout the whole country of Mesopotamia, but the sandy deserts, by which the southern portion is surrounded, render the climate remarkably warm in the summer season.

The familiarity of shepherds with their flocks in oriental countries was very remarkable. We read of their going before, leading, calling their sheep, and of their flocks following, and distinguishing their voices. Jacob was, indeed, one of the most celebrated shepherds of the patriarchal age, for he not only tended his flock, but improved the variety. The object of the drawing is to exhibit him in the discharge of his duties, and the result of his ameliorating labours, which may be traced in the appearance of the sheep.

Salvator Rosa has painted this subject; but his Jacob is a bandit of the Abruzzi, and the sheep those of the Campagna of Rome—a mode of representation contrary to both reason and Scripture. He has also represented the flock on the margin of a rich stream of water, which is equally opposed to the truth. As Scripture represents, so the flocks feeding on the plains of Mesopotamia are watered, in the absence of streams, from a well; whence it arose that a good well was considered by the inhabitants an invaluable blessing. On the possession of wells, indeed, depended the existence of men and beasts in many parts of the East.

The costume in which Jacob appears in the drawing is that of the primitive Bedouin. As the manners and habits of the orientals continue unchanged, it is probable that Jacob wore such a dress while tending his flocks.

Two distinct races of sheep are, in the present day, found inhabiting Syria and Palestine, the Bedouin and the Syrian. The latter species is the more numerous, and, therefore, introduced into the drawing, with the improved varieties of ringstraked, spotted, speckled, etc. As the Syrian variety, indeed, is found in great perfection in countries with which the Hebrews were conversant, it is highly probable that it composed the flocks of the patriarchs. The tail of one of these animals is very broad and large, hence the variety has been an object of wonder to every traveller from the time of Herodotus. Dr. Russell, in his "Natural History of Aleppo," says, that the carcass of a sheep of this variety, exclusive

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of the head, feet, skin, etc., weighs from sixty to eighty pounds, of which the tail alone usually weighs fifteen pounds. To preserve these appendages from injury, the Arabs frequently affix a piece of board to the under part, and sometimes it is found necessary to attach wheels. The fat of the tail is employed as a substitute for butter and oil, and when eaten with boiled rice it is very palatable. Under the Mosaic law, the Levites were constantly directed to place the hind part, or tail, whole on the fire of the altar. The reason for this is obvious. It was the most delicate part of the animal, and, therefore, the most proper to be presented in sacrifice to Jehovah, under a dispensation of types and shadows.

In contemplating the calm and benevolent attitude of Jacob, the shepherd, the mind recurs to the many beautiful figures found in Scripture which are drawn from the pastoral character. The Hebrew nation was truly pastoral; and it is from this circumstance that they are frequently mentioned as a flock of sheep, under the care of their great Shepherd, Jehovah. The prophet Ezekiel speaks of the Jews in this character, when describing their return from captivity under his Almighty protection.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock
In the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered :
So will I seek out my sheep,
And will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered
In the cloudy and dark day.
And I will bring them out from the people,
And gather them from the countries,
And will bring them to their own land,
And feed them upon the mountains of Israel
By the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.
I will feed them in a good pasture,
And upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be :
There shall they lie in a good fold,
And in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.
I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down,
Saith the Lord God. *Ezek. xxxiv. 12—15.*

See also *Psalm lxxiv. 1; lxxviii. 52; lxxix. 13; xciv. 7;*
Jer. xxiii. 1; l. 6, etc.

As the gracious relation of Jehovah and the Israelites was thus represented, so is Jesus Christ and the spiritual Israel represented, both in the Old and New Testaments. Thus Isaiah, alluding to the oriental custom of the shepherds carrying the lambs in their arms,

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and of driving the dams tenderly when they were with young, says:—

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd :
He shall gather the lambs with his arm,
And carry them in his bosom,
And shall gently lead those that are with young. Isa. xl. 11.

The young, the weary, and the weak believer alike shall know his tender care. See also Jer. xxiii. 3, 4; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Zech. xiii. 7.

Our Lord himself, having reference to these passages, in John, chap. x., after delineating the duties of a faithful shepherd, in which he makes some interesting allusions to oriental usages—such as calling the sheep by name, the shepherd going before while they follow, and their recognising and obeying his voice—asserted, before the enraged Jews, who were well acquainted with prophecy, that he was “the Good Shepherd;” after which, he characterized his sheep, showed what love he bears to them, and described their eternal safety under his protection. After his resurrection, he charged his disciples, and all his ministers after them, to feed his sheep and his lambs.

The strongest proof which our Lord has given of his being “the Good Shepherd,” is his death on the cross. He had power to retain his life; but he saw mankind going astray like “lost sheep,” and he offered to die for their redemption. Looking at the greatness of his love, therefore, what solid ground does the Christian possess for confidence and rejoicing! He may say:—

The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know ;
I feed in green pastures, safe-folded I rest ;
He leadeth my soul where the still waters flow,
Restores me when wandering, redeems when opprest.

And, looking to the future, when he will be surrounded by the thick shadows of death, he may still exclaim with exultation:—

Through the valley and shadow of death though I stray,
Since Thou art my Guardian, no evil I fear ;
Thy rod shall defend me, thy staff be my stay,
No harm can befall, with my Comforter near.

MONTGOMERY.

Through the sacrifice of Christ the valley of the shadow of death opens a vista to heaven, to the sight of the dying Christian.

NEHEMIAH AND THE SABBATH-BREAKERS OF JUDAH.

(NEH. XIII. 15—22.)

JERUSALEM was destroyed, and its citizens taken captive, according to the voice of prophecy, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, B.C. 586, and his successors, Evil-Merodach, and Belshazzar, enjoyed his triumphs. The Jews mourned beneath their yoke, but at length the power of the Babylonian monarchy was broken by “the Mede and the Persian”—Darius and Cyrus—and the dawn of liberty appeared. Cyrus had been mentioned by Isaiah, and his very name foretold as their deliverer more than a century before his birth; Isa. xliv. 28; and when, on the death of Darius, he ruled alone, stirred up by the Lord, he issued this interesting proclamation:—“Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.” Ezra i. 2—4. B.C. 536.

Thus favoured by the Persian monarch, Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiachim, one of the last of the Hebrew monarchs, and Jeshua, a grandson of the high priest Jozadak, with ten of the principal elders, prepared themselves for the journey home. They were accompanied by fifty thousand Jews, chiefly of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. They carried with them the sacred vessels of the temple, which had been taken down to Babylon as spoils, together with a large contribution towards the rebuilding of the sacred edifice, made by their brethren who remained behind.

When these Jews arrived in Palestine they dispersed themselves in search of their native cities, and of necessaries for their families. They still, however, kept the burden of the edict of Cyrus, that of rebuilding the temple, in memory. This was proved by their first public act. In the following month after their arrival, they assembled at Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of tabernacles, on which occasion an altar was reared upon the ruins of the temple,

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and the customary sacrifices were offered, as in the days of yore. This marked the design which they entertained of one day re-erecting the sacred edifice, thrown down by the fierce Chaldean.

The foundations of the new temple were laid in the second month of the second year after their return, B.C. 535, and the top stone was raised with joy, in the sixth year of Darius, B.C. 516.

As the temple appeared when it was completed, in the days of Darius Hystaspes, so it seems to have remained till the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who authorized "Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven," to proceed to Jerusalem, B.C. 457, "to beautify the house of Jehovah," and to establish the ecclesiastical and civil institutions with greater firmness and order than they had yet acquired. Ezra proceeded on his mission, and he was yet labouring to raise the character and improve the condition of the Hebrews, when Nehemiah was appointed civil governor of Judea, in succession to Zerubbabel, who died B.C. 444.

The circumstances attending the appointment of Nehemiah to the governorship of Judea are very remarkable. He was cup-bearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus, and one day being much depressed in spirits from the consideration that although the temple was rebuilt, yet was it, together with the city and its inhabitants, left defenceless, seeing that its walls were still levelled with the ground, the king demanded the cause of his sadness. It was no ordinary misdemeanour to exhibit a mournful countenance in the presence of the kings of Persia, and alarmed for his safety, Nehemiah replied:—"Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" Neh. ii. 3. Nehemiah found favour in the sight of Artaxerxes Longimanus; he received a commission from him to resort to Jerusalem, and to secure the city from the foes who had long troubled the peace of its inhabitants, by rebuilding its walls and gates. Nehemiah was also directed to build a palace for himself and future governors, and afterwards to re-erect the fallen city.

Nehemiah executed his commission with singular zeal, ability, and disinterestedness. Despite the fierce opposition of Sanballat the Samaritan, Tobiah the Ammonite, the Arabians, and the remnant of the Philistines, the wall was finished, with all its towers and gates, in the short space of fifty-two days. When completed, like the temple, they were dedicated with great solemnity and joy.

NEHEMIAH AND THE SABBATH-BREAKERS OF JUDAH.

The zeal of Nehemiah was not confined to the stone and mortar framework of the social system which he desired to establish. History, and past experience, had taught him that walls and bulwarks are vain to defend a people who lightly disregard the commands of Jehovah. Hence, together with Ezra, he convinced the Jews that they had grievously neglected many of the injunctions of the law of Moses, and induced them to enter into a solemn covenant to adhere to them for the future. They pledged themselves to walk in God's law as given to Moses; not to intermarry with the people of the land; to observe the sabbath day; to keep the sabbatical year, and to remit all debts therein; to pay the tax of a third of a shekel yearly for the service of the temple; and to render their first fruits and tithes, as required by the law.

Among the Jews, these solemn compacts appear too frequently to have been made only to be broken. While Nehemiah remained at Jerusalem they kept the covenant into which they had entered, but when, at the expiration of his twelfth year of office, B.C. 432, he resumed his station at the Persian court, it was, together with all his salutary regulations, gradually infringed and violated.

Thus baffled in his pious designs, Nehemiah obtained permission to return to Judea, B.C. 424, and on his arrival, he applied himself most vigorously to the correction of the evils which had gained ground during his absence. One of these was the profanation of the sabbath. Seeing the people tread the wine-presses on that holy day, and bring in their various burdens from the harvest-field, and the fish-market of Tyre, with all manner of merchandize, he not only testified against them, but commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, "and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day."

It is to this desecration of the sabbath that the annexed engraving has reference. It represents a harvest-scene in the fruitful "divisions" of Judah, in which Jacob, in his dying moments, prophesied of the person of its first founder, with particular reference to his posterity, that he should bind "his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine," and, likewise, "wash his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." Gen. xlix. 11. The domain of Judah was celebrated as a vine-clad country, and so it continued through all the desolations of the captivity, for on the return of Nehemiah from the Persian court, he is said to have stood in the midst of Judah while he uttered his lamentation over the

NEHEMIAH AND THE SABBATH-BREAKERS OF JUDAH.

profanation of the sabbath, by the treading of wine-presses, bringing in sheaves, loading asses, and other secular employments.

The engraving exhibits a fertile vineyard, as to be seen at the present day, near the city of Jerusalem. It also shows the form of the wine-press, such as is trodden alone: in the foreground are the ordinary operations of grape-gathering and loading of sheaves. The engraving below has been designed from a Babylonian seal of the age of Nehemiah, and may serve to illustrate his holy indignation against the violators of the Divine laws.

The zeal of Nehemiah effected a complete reformation. By it Divine worship was re-established at Jerusalem, and the sabbath purified from profanations. And well would it be if men of all classes of society would learn from the pious governor of Jerusalem, to love and promote the due observance of the sabbath.

Sabbath-breaking is a crying sin in our highly-favoured country. Pleasure and business have greater charms than devotion, and the house of God is deserted. Regardless of precept and example, the sabbath-breaker is seen on every hand during that holy day doing his own will, and walking after the imaginations of his own heart. If such should read these pages, we would warn them that the hour is approaching when these golden seasons will be no more. Their sabbaths will have soon passed away, and, unless they repent, their doom will be irrevocably sealed!





JOSEPH SUPPLYING CORN FROM THE EGYPTIAN STOREHOUSES.

JOSEPH SUPPLYING CORN FROM THE EGYPTIAN STORE-HOUSES.

(GENESIS XLI. 54—57.)

ABOUT the year B.C. 1872, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had two remarkable dreams, by which he was greatly troubled. He thought that he was standing on the margin of the Nile, when he beheld seven beautiful fat heifers come forth from the water, and feed in a meadow. He was yet admiring them, when there came up, at the same spot, seven of the leanest and most ill-conditioned heifers that the king had ever seen, and these devoured the seven beautiful and fat heifers, and yet appeared lean and ill-favoured still. Pharaoh then awoke. But he again fell asleep, and then he dreamed that he saw seven good and plump ears of corn spring up on one stalk, which were succeeded by seven other ears of corn, thin and blasted by the east wind, and by these the first were devoured.

As these dreams appeared to import some remarkable event, Pharaoh was anxious to have them interpreted. Accordingly, in the morning, he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt for that purpose. They came; and as they stood before him, Pharaoh related his dreams; but the meaning of them was too deep for their skill; “none could interpret them unto Pharaoh.”

How anxious Pharaoh was to have his two-fold dream interpreted, is discovered in the circumstances which followed. About two years before, the Hebrew, Joseph, had interpreted a dream with which his then fellow-prisoner, Pharaoh’s butler, was visited, to the effect that he would be restored to his office. He was restored, and he related the circumstance to Pharaoh, when he saw him in this dilemma, and the monarch’s mandate was instantly issued for the Hebrew to be brought into his presence. Joseph was allowed but just time to shave his head and beard, and to change his raiment, before he was hurried off to the palace, and presented to the king. As soon as he arrived, Pharaoh addressed him thus:—“I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.” The answer of Joseph was very pleasing. Unwilling to encourage even a kingly delusion, he replied, that the solution belonged not to himself, but to

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God, who would give to the king "an answer of peace." Pharaoh then related his dreams, and Joseph, instructed by God, replied, that they had both the same signification; namely, that seven years of exuberant plenty were coming, which would be followed by seven years of the severest scarcity ever experienced.

Having thus interpreted the double dream, Joseph proceeded to advise Pharaoh how to husband the exuberant supplies of the seven fertile years, so as to meet the deficiencies of the seven years of scarcity which were to follow. "Now therefore," said he, "let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine." Struck no less by the interpretation of his dreams, than by the wisdom of the plan by which Joseph proposed to avert the evils which that interpretation threatened, the king asked those around him, in the language of astonishment, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" Then, addressing himself to Joseph, he said, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou." Pharaoh then proceeded to invest him with this high office. He drew his signet-ring from his finger, and placed it upon the finger of Joseph, conveying to him by that act the highest powers he could delegate, saying, as he did it, "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." He then caused him to be arrayed in vestures of fine linen, such as are worn only by royal and high persons in the East, after which he placed a chain of gold about his neck with his own hands. As it was usual, also, to promulgate with high pomp and ceremony such acts of royal favour, and to make known the authority which had been conferred, the king commanded that he should be conducted through the city in the second of the royal chariots, and that his heralds should shout before him, "Bow the knee!"

On the return of Joseph, the monarch expressed his own view

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of the powers he had conferred to him in more emphatic language. "I am Pharaoh," or "the king," said he; "and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." Then, that his foreign origin might not be constantly presented to the mind of the Egyptians by his strange name, the king bestowed on him the high-sounding name of Zaphnath-paaneah, signifying "revealer of secrets;" and, that he might establish him in his position by securing him the support of the priestly order, he got him married to Asenath, daughter of Poti-pherah, the chief priest of On, or Heliopolis.

The years of exuberant plenty came, as Joseph had foretold; and during that season he made a tour of survey through all the land of Egypt, establishing granaries, and laying up stores, according to his own suggestions, that "the people of the land might not perish through famine." This was a merciful provision, for the years of famine came at the appointed time, and its pressure soon began* to be felt severely. So fearful were its ravages indeed, that all the people of Egypt were on the point of famishing, and "they cried to Pharaoh for bread." Pharaoh listened to their cry, and referred them to Joseph, who now understanding that the proper time was arrived, opened his well-filled granaries and sold corn, not only to the Egyptians, but, with some restrictions, to foreigners, for the dearth was not confined to Egypt, but extended at least to Syria.

Such is the scene represented in the engraving annexed to this narrative. And it may be observed of the history of Joseph, that it affords a theme for the best exercise of the pencil; yet few of the great personages of Scripture have been more fancifully or injuriously treated. By Raffaelle he is painted as an Italian peasant; by Rembrandt as a Dutch gentleman; and by Gentileschi, as a hero of romance. In the present engraving the artist has restored him to the costume and circumstances of the times, the details of which have been carefully studied from the early Egyptian monuments. All this, coupled with the narrative, renders it a subject of much interest. The reader's attention is also directed to the architecture, which is pure Egyptian.

The manner in which Joseph dispensed the stores which he had so judiciously collected was marked by consummate wisdom. In the second year of the famine, when the money and the cattle of the Egyptians failed, by their own desire, he bought all their lands for the crown, in return for supplying them with provisions;

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and he then brought the people, who were scattered throughout the open country, into the adjacent cities, wherein the corn was stored, for the greater ease of distribution, from the one end of the borders of Egypt even unto the other. The lands thus voluntarily sold, he farmed to the occupiers again at the moderate and fixed rent of a fifth part of the produce, by which wise regulation the people had four-fifths of the produce of their lands for their own use, and were exempted from any further taxes, the king being bound to support his civil and military establishment out of the crown rents. At the same time Joseph respected the primitive usage, and bought not "the lands of the priests," but during the continuance of the famine he fed them at the king's expense.

Thus was this consummate statesman, so truly "wise and discreet" because he was directed by the Spirit of God, a "father to Pharaoh" and his people. Nor to them alone. The famine was felt severely in the land of Canaan, and his brethren who sold him into Egypt sought relief at his hands. He gave it freely; and, at the command of the grateful Pharaoh, he sent for his aged father, who had long mourned for him as one that he should see no more on this side of the grave, and he nourished him, with his numerous descendants, with "the good of all the land of Egypt."*

How beautifully does the superintending care of Divine Providence shine forth in this narrative; and that in a twofold light! We see in it that the Almighty not only extends his fatherly protection to nations, but to individuals. While Egypt and the adjacent regions were saved by his mercy from the ruin which hung over them, Joseph was delivered by the same mercy from his galling fetters. What encouragement is there, therefore, for men to cast all their cares upon him! Doubtless, Joseph acted thus, and it was not in vain.

And yet, with such examples as these set before them, mankind are so blind as to forget God. He is not in all their thoughts. In prosperity and in adversity the many look not beyond themselves; deeming the one the fruits of their own worthiness or exertions, and the other the effects of their "ill stars." Even those who believe in a Divine Providence too frequently distrust it. They know there is a God presiding over all his works, and yet fear that they are overlooked. But the tender mercies of God are over all his works, Psa. cxlv. 9.

* See the account of "Jacob and his Family journeying to Egypt."



JACOB AND HIS FAMILY JOURNEYING TO EGYPT.

JACOB AND HIS FAMILY JOURNEYING TO EGYPT.

(GENESIS XLVI. 1—27.)

JACOB, who was the root of the Jewish tribes, and the progenitor of the Messiah, had twelve sons. Among these sons there was one named Joseph, who, being the son of his beloved Rachel, was loved by him more than all his children. This undue partiality excited the envy of his brethren; and this feeling was increased by two dreams which Joseph had, and which he related.

The first of these dreams was, that Joseph and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, and the sheaves of his brothers made obeisance to his sheaf: the second, that he had seen the sun, and the moon, and the stars doing homage to him. Both Jacob, and his other sons, seem to have considered these dreams as indicative of Joseph's future superiority. Jacob, doubtless, rejoiced in heart at his loved one's future greatness, though he chided him gently for his seeming aspirations. But the feelings of his brethren were different. The fond father's uniform preference for Joseph, combined with these dreams, had the effect of exciting their evil passions, and of causing them to conspire against the life of their brother.

The eldest sons of Jacob fed their flocks near Shechem; and he being desirous of knowing how they fared, sent Joseph thither to inquire after their welfare. No sooner did they see Joseph than they resolved to slay him, and to report to their father that he was killed by an evil beast. They would have committed this atrocious act, had it not been for the interposition of Reuben, who advised them to cast him into a pit near at hand, intending to rescue him privately. This proposal was acceded to; but a company of Ishmeelites coming by soon after, Judah proposed that he should be sold to them; and Joseph was carried by them into Egypt as a slave.

The merciless brothers now consulted together concerning the account they should give of Joseph to their father, and they came to the resolution of telling him, that an evil beast had devoured him. This sad and false report was made; and in confirmation of it they exhibited a parti-coloured coat, which Jacob had recently given to his favourite Joseph, dyed in blood, asking him whether

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he knew it, and telling him they had found it. Jacob did know the coat, and he cried out in agony of soul: "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces," Gen. xxxvii. 33. Then putting on sackcloth, he resolved to mourn for him during the rest of his life.

Thus years rolled on, witnessing the tears of Jacob for the lost son of his beloved Rachel. In the mean time, however, Joseph was undergoing many vicissitudes, in which the hand of an overruling Providence is clearly traced. He became servant to Potiphar, a man of rank, and a captain of Pharaoh's royal guard. Him Joseph served faithfully and acceptably; but through the base conduct of the wife of Potiphar he was unjustly thrown into prison, where the "iron entered into his soul." While here, he interpreted the dreams of two fellow-prisoners, the butler and the baker of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and according to his interpretation so the events came to pass: the butler was restored to his office, and the baker was hanged. This was the turning point in Joseph's history. Some time after, Pharaoh had a double dream, which none of his wise men could interpret, and the butler reported the wisdom of Joseph to his master. Accordingly, the bonds of his oppression were broken. He was sent for to the palace; and having interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh as portending seven years of great abundance and seven years of famine in succession, he was made governor of all the land of Egypt.

At length the famine came; and so wide-spread were its horrors, that it threatened destruction to the neighbouring countries; and Jacob and his household partook of the general calamity. In this emergency, the aged patriarch heard that there was a store of corn laid up in Egypt, and he sent his ten eldest sons down thither to provide a supply for their subsistence. On their arrival, they were treated as spies; and Joseph required them to bring down Benjamin with them, detaining Simeon as a pledge of their return.

This was a fresh affliction to the aged patriarch. "Me," he cried, "have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me," Gen. xlvi. 36. It was some time before Jacob would give his consent for Benjamin to travel into Egypt; but the famine increasing, he at length gave permission. He sent his sons away, with a present to the governor, fervently praying that God would

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bless them, and restore to him their other brother, Simeon, and Benjamin: he added, “If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved,” Gen. xlvi. 14.

In these expressions of deep emotion, the aged patriarch uttered no wish for the restoration of Joseph to his tents. His memory was fondly cherished; but the stratagem of his undutiful sons had wrought in his mind so firm a conviction that he was numbered with the dead, that he entertained not the remotest idea of ever hearing his voice again. The ways of God, however, are not as the ways of short-sighted man. The sons of Jacob returned, and while his eyes were gladdened with the sight of Simeon and Benjamin, his ears were greeted with the joyful tidings that the governor of Egypt was his long-lost Joseph.

When Jacob first heard this intelligence, his feelings were over-powered, and he could give no credence to the news. Pharaoh had, however, commissioned Joseph to send wagons into Canaan, to carry him and his family down to Egypt; and when he saw these, his spirit revived, and he exclaimed, “It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die,” Gen. xlvi. 28. Acting upon this resolve, therefore, Jacob collected all his wealth, and hastened into Egypt, to be re-united to his much-loved Joseph.

The accompanying illustration of this celebrated event in Scripture history has been designed from a painting in the tomb of Osirtasen, at Beni Hassan, and described by antiquaries as, An arrival of foreigners in Egypt. It has, indeed, been conjectured that these “foreigners” are Jacob and his family on their way to the court of Joseph. The grounds on which this supposition rests are, chiefly, that the king in whose tomb the picture was found is believed to be the Pharaoh who protected Joseph, and that the costume and physiognomy of the characters are decidedly Jewish, and accord with the nomadic habits of the sons of Jacob. This view of the engraving renders it doubly interesting as an illustration of the sacred narrative. It opposes the ideas of Le Brun, Gentileschi, Rembrandt, Raphael, and others, who in their pictures of scenes in the life of Joseph have blended Grecian architecture, Turkish costume, French furniture, Italian landscape, etc., as illustrations of the narrative. Indeed, the great error of painters in their pictures illustrative of Scripture history is, in general, the substitution of European ideas for oriental.

The meeting of good old Israel with his much-loved son Joseph

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was most tender and affectionate. The sacred historian says that Joseph fell on his father's neck, "and wept on his neck a good while;" and that Israel said unto Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive," Gen. xlvi. 29, 30. Although both Jacob and Joseph knew well that in the course of nature they must soon be separated, yet was their cup of joy full, as they beheld each other once more in the land of the living.

Oh, if the happiness of relatives and friends is so great at meeting on earth, after a long separation, how great must their joys be who, washed in the blood of the Lamb, are re-united in the courts of heaven, never again to be separated! The hope of such a meeting is a consolation under bereavement. It enables the mourner to look beyond the grave, and to realize in thought that happiness which his Redeemer has prepared for him. He may be tempted sometimes to exclaim, in the anguish of his soul,

'Tis a long lingering death we mortals die ;
Daily our hopes, our friends, our pleasures fade,
Till nought is left us but to heave a sigh,
Draw the last breath, and lifeless drop the head.

Yet he knows, that if those for whom we mourn have been followers of the Lamb, and we are treading in their steps, they will be given to us again for ever in glory. Christian reader,

Art thou a MOURNER ? Hast thou known
The joy of innocent delights,
Endearing days for ever flown,
And tranquil nights ?

OH LIVE !—and deeply cherish still
The sweet remembrance of the past ;
And trust on Heaven's unchanging will
For peace at last.

J. MONTGOMERY.



THE FUNERAL OF JACOB.

THE FUNERAL OF JACOB.

(GENESIS L. 12, 13.)

ABOUT the year B.C. 1864, a grievous famine prevailed, both in Egypt and Syria. Its horrors, however, were averted by Divine Providence. Joseph, the son of good old Israel, was sold into Egypt by his brethren; and Pharaoh, the king of that country, having been favoured with two remarkable dreams, indicating this notable event, the Hebrew captive interpreted them, and he was made governor of Egypt, in which capacity, to use his own language, he “ saved much people alive.”

Among those whom Joseph saved, were his venerable father and his brethren. Having heard that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob sent his sons thither, and Joseph finally made himself known to them; and, at the desire of Pharaoh, he sent for his father, promising to nourish him and all his household, so long as the famine continued. Gladdened by the intelligence, the aged patriarch resolved to accept the invitation, and to sojourn with Joseph in the land of Egypt.

The meeting of the sorrowing parent and the lost son took place in Goshen, and it was touchingly tender. As they approached each other Joseph fell upon his father’s neck and wept, and Jacob said to his son, in the fulness of his heart, “ Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.”* Gen. xlvi. 30.

When the emotions of this meeting had subsided, Joseph informed his brethren that he would go and announce their arrival to Pharaoh, after which he would introduce some of them to the royal presence. For this purpose, indeed, he took with him five of the most comely of his brothers, and returned to the capital. Arrived there, Joseph first had an audience of the king, after which his brothers were called into the regal presence.

The occupation of Joseph’s brethren was pastoral, and every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians. Knowing this, and foreseeing that Pharaoh would interrogate them as to their occupation, before they were introduced Joseph gave them instructions which had reference to that state of feeling. He directed

* For more ample details of these events the reader is referred to the previous articles of “ Jacob and his Family journeying to Egypt,” and “ Joseph supplying Corn from the Egyptian Storehouses.”

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them to reply, that they were shepherds, as all their fathers had been. And to this effect they did reply to the monarch; adding, that they had come to sojourn in Egypt, for in the land of Canaan the drought had been so severe, that there was no pasture for their flocks, and concluding with a request that they might be allowed to pasture them in Goshen. The reply of Pharaoh to this request of the sons of Jacob showed, at once, his gratitude and his affection for his deliverer. Turning to Joseph, he told him that the whole land was at his disposal, that he might place them in the best part of it, and in Goshen, if he deemed that district the most suitable for them and their flocks.

Having thus succeeded in his plan for the benefit of his family, Joseph introduced his father to Pharaoh. On approaching the monarch, the aged patriarch blessed him, and Pharaoh, struck by his venerable appearance, entered into conversation with him, particularly inquiring his age. Jacob's answer was emphatic, and well calculated to teach his royal hearer the vanity of all sublunary things:—"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Gen. xlvi. 9. Having taught this lesson to the monarch, Jacob again blessed Pharaoh, and then withdrew from his presence.

Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years; five in which the dearth prevailed, and twelve succeeding, which were fruitful. During this period Joseph tenderly nourished him and all his family with the good of the land of Egypt. At the end of this time, however, the partial failure of his sight, and the decay of his bodily powers, gave Jacob warning that the day when he should be called upon to end his earthly pilgrimage was approaching. Under this impression, he sent for Joseph, and expressed his desire that his body should be placed with his fathers, in the cave of Machpelah, and engaged him to promise by oath, that he should be buried in Canaan.

Soon after this, intelligence reached Joseph that his father was very ill, and seemed likely to die. Borne on the wings of duty, he hastened to his bedside, taking with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. When he arrived, Jacob exerted his remaining strength, and sat up in the bed, to receive him, and beneath his parting blessings.

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Jacob first dwelt on the glorious promises of God to himself, especially at Bethel; and he then made tender mention of the death of Rachel, for whose dear sake he proposed to give her beloved son, Joseph, a strong mark of his regard, namely, to bestow upon him, through his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, a double portion, in that rich inheritance yet in reserve for his posterity. As Jacob could not see clearly, he had not observed that Manasseh and Ephraim were present, but, at length, he perceived that there were some persons with Joseph, and being told who they were, he desired them to be brought nearer, that he might bless them.

In causing his sons to kneel before their reverend grandfather, Joseph placed the eldest, Manasseh, opposite his right hand, and Ephraim opposite his left. He evidently expected that Manasseh would receive the chief blessing; but Jacob crossed his hands, placing the right upon the head of Ephraim, and when Joseph attempted to rectify what he imagined might be a mistake, his father persisted, assuring him that he acted by the Divine direction; and he then bestowed upon Ephraim, prophetically, the larger blessing, which was enjoyed by his tribe in succeeding ages.

After this, Jacob, feeling that the hour of his death approached, called all his sons together, that he might predict to them, severally, what should befall their families in their latter days. He did this, by Divine inspiration, in a noble poem, the most ancient which has been preserved in any language; and in which he prophetically described the several characters of his sons, and the distinguishing features of their future possessions, in language alternately tender, pathetic, and stern, and replete with beautiful and natural imagery. See Gen. xlix.

Jacob concluded his predictions by repeating the charge which he had already given to Joseph separately, concerning his burial in the family sepulchre. Then, as if the exertion had been too much for his waning strength, he laid himself down on the bed, and softly yielded up the ghost. The affection which Joseph entertained for his venerable father was strikingly displayed at his death. He fell upon his lifeless form, wept over it, kissed it, and commanded Egyptian physicians to embalm the body; and, after a mourning of seventy days, attended by all the state officers and principal nobility of Egypt, he carried his remains into Canaan, and buried them in the cave of Machpelah.

The funeral of Jacob was, in all that concerned the parapher,

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nalia of the occasion, a purely Egyptian ceremony. As related, the body of the venerable patriarch was embalmed by the physicians of Egypt; mourned over by the people for seventy days; and, finally, conveyed to its place of repose with Abraham and Isaac, by a magnificent escort of chariots and horsemen. The artist, catching this idea, has accordingly represented the ceremony as Egyptian. The mourning cavalcade is depicted, as it may be supposed to have been seen, descending one of the precipitous defiles of Northern Arabia. In the front is discerned the funeral car drawn by horses richly caparisoned, and surrounded and followed by the servants of Pharoah, in company with the Hebrew mourners. The authorities from whence the artist has derived his ideas, may be found in the many sculptures, paintings, and drawings on papyri, which exhibit the death, the judgment, the passage of the soul across the great lake, and various Egyptian funeral ceremonies.

The sacred historian, describing the funeral of Jacob, says, that it consisted of a very great company, and that they mourned for the deceased "with a great and very sore lamentation." Doubtless, however, the sons of Jacob did not mourn as those without hope. In the midst of his prophetic address to them the aged saint breathed this aspiration to the Almighty: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord;" and they could not fail to remember his words, and to derive comfort from them in their sorrows. Reader, so live that you may use such language, as well for your own comfort, as the consolation of those who, one day, will mourn over you.





THE INFANT MOSES FOUND BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER.

THE INFANT MOSES FOUND BY PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER.

(EXODUS II. 5, 6.)

IN the patriarchal ages, Egypt was visited by two remarkable providential occurrences. During seven years a superabundance of corn grew in that fertile "valley of the Nile;" which seven years were succeeded by an equal period of great dearth. This had been signified to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in two night visions; which none of his wise men could interpret. Joseph, however, who was at that time confined unjustly in the king's prison, was inspired by God to reveal the secret; and, being raised for his wisdom to the high post of governor of Egypt, he preserved the nation from the dire effects of the famine.

Pharaoh and his people were grateful for the services of Joseph. This was shown in various ways; but one of the most pleasing instances of the monarch's gratitude, is that in which he directed Joseph to send for his aged father, and his numerous descendants, out of Syria—where the effects of the famine were also felt—that they might enjoy "the good of all the land of Egypt." The father and the brethren of Joseph, therefore, went down to Egypt; and the rich pastures of the land of Goshen were assigned to them by the grateful monarch. But in process of time a Pharaoh, or king, ascended the throne of Egypt, who, unlike his predecessors, looked upon the Hebrews with a jealous eye, and commenced an iron rule over them. Conceiving their increasing numbers formidable to the future peace and prosperity of the Egyptian state, in order to reduce them he compelled them to relinquish their mode of life as tent-dwelling shepherds, and to cultivate that soil originally granted them for pasturage. He likewise required that they should make bricks, build towns, and perform many other works, both painful and hateful to a pastoral people. Like the Bedouins of the present day, indeed, they would not have executed such works, unless by coercion. Pharaoh knew this, and the execution of his will was confided to task-masters, who "made their lives bitter with hard bondage."

But the end was not accomplished. The more the Hebrews were oppressed the more they multiplied, and the more Pharaoh and his people were alarmed. A new expedient was, therefore, devised to

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check their increase. The Hebrew midwives were ordered to destroy all the male children that should be born; and they daring to disobey, an edict was issued by the cruel monarch, empowering and directing his own subjects to commit the dark crime.

This edict threatened to desolate the Hebrew race; but it proved the means of their deliverance. Jochebed, the wife of Amram, of the tribe of Levi, bare a son shortly after its promulgation, and the fond parents hazarded their safety by concealing him in the house three months. At length, however, it became impossible to hide the infant any longer; but his tender mother was unwilling to give him up to immediate death. In her extremity, she made a basket-work boat of bulrushes, or *cyperus papyrus*, coating it within and without with slime and pitch, mineral and vegetable productions, that it might float upon the water.

Thus was Moses, the future deliverer of Israel, committed to the waters of the Nile, that stream which abounded with the crocodile, remorseless as the monarch; and his sister was stationed near to watch the event. His death appeared to be certain. But, no! He who spread abroad the blue vault of heaven as a molten glass, He who created the stupendous globe on which we live, with all the diversified and wonderful divisions of the universe, cared for the tender babe. The daughter of the regal murderer came down to bathe in the waters of the Nile, and the directing hand of Providence gave the babe into her charge. The sacred historian says:—

“ And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river’s side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”

Though the babe belonged to the despised Hebrew race, and though doomed to destruction by her tyrant father, as she saw the tears trickling down the face of the innocent, she resolved to be his protectress. Influenced by the tender sentiments of humanity, she called aloud for a nurse, and his sister, who had now mingled with her attendants, offered to recommend a Hebrew matron to undertake the charge. The offer was accepted, and his sister fetched the babe’s own mother, who received him from the noble-minded princess, with a charge to nurse him for her, for wages.

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In works of art it has been the practice to place these occurrences in the centre of a pond, and to give the characters an Italian costume, while the child is represented stretching its naked limbs on a vessel similar to a needlewoman's fancy basket. Such is the celebrated picture of Vandyke; and, to carry out his European ideas to the utmost, he has represented the princess and a single attendant reaching over a bed of flags, such as are seen on the margin of our own rivers, as though they were in the act of searching for some lost treasure, while tame water-fowl of the family of the *Anatinæ*, stand gazing and cackling at the intruders.

In opposition to these travesties, it has been the artist's aim, in the accompanying drawing, to give a faithful translation of the Scripture narrative. In doing so, however, he has been compelled to infer the presence of the various objects which constitute the action and locality of the picture. Still, in these arrangements, he has been guided by the analogies furnished in the contemporary monuments of Egypt, which pour a flood of light on ancient usages. Thus, he has determined that when the daughter of Pharaoh went "down to wash herself at the river," she went not down into the open stream. Had she done this, she would have been exposed to the inconveniences of a scorching sun, to the dangers of a rapid current, and to the devouring jaws of the crocodile. According to oriental and classical, to ancient and modern usages, the cool chambers of a bath are employed for such a purpose. Hence it is, that the princess is supposed, in the drawing, to be walking on the terrace of such a bath, where she becomes a witness to the safe arrival of the little stranger at its portal. Hence, it is also supposed, that the affectionate care of the mother would prompt her to close the ark, and give it a form capable of floating. The narrative intimates, indeed, that when the maid had "opened" the ark the princess "saw the child:" and it was common in Egypt, in the days of the ancients, to make little barks of the *cyperus papyrus*, to float upon the Nile at the period of its inundation. Such vessels were also used, with slight variation, on the rivers of Mesopotamia; and Lucan describes such in connexion with our own forefathers.

The bending willows into barks they twine,
Then line the work with skins of slaughtered kine ;
Such are the floats Venetian fishers know,
Where in dull marshes stands the settling Po ;

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On such to neighbouring Gaul, allured by gain,
The bolder Britons cross the swelling main.
Like these, when fruitful Egypt lies afloat,
The Memphian artist builds his reedy boat.

Rowe's *Lucan.*

The after-history of Moses is one of the most interesting recorded in the pages of Holy Writ. Carrying out her benevolent designs, when the child needed a nurse no longer, the princess took him to court, and caused him to be instructed in all the "wisdom of the Egyptians." He was regarded as a prince in the palace of the monarch who had decreed his destruction. Thus he lived till he was forty years of age, when, moved by a Divine impulse to undertake the deliverance of his countrymen, he, "by faith," refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward," Heb. xi. 24—26. He was finally empowered to break the chains of Israel's bondage, and to lead them, in the face of danger, to the promised land.

Moses was an eminent character; but there is One "worthy of more glory, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house," Heb. iii. 3. That One is our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Moses was a type. As this great prophet brought forth the Hebrews from their house of bondage to a land of rest and liberty, a land "flowing with milk and honey," so Jesus Christ brings his people, whom he hath redeemed with his blood, out of the prison-house of sin, and leads them to a land, where they hunger and thirst no more, and where God wipes away all tears from their eyes, Rev. vii. 16, 17.



MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

(EXODUS V. ETC.)

DURING the period in which the children of Israel sojourned in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh, the king of that country, dreading their increasing power, promulgated an edict, to the effect that all their male children should be destroyed. This cruel mandate was generally obeyed; but Jochebed, the wife of Amram, of the tribe of Levi, having given birth to a son, she hid him for three months in her house, and then committed him in a frail bark to the waters of the Nile. In this situation the child was found by Pharaoh's daughter, who, taking compassion on him, resolved to bring him up as her own son, under the name of Moses, which signifies, "taken out of the water."

Moses remained in the palace of Pharaoh till he was forty years of age, when he resolved to renounce his bright prospects, and take part with his afflicted brethren. He desired to deliver them from their bondage, but he was repulsed by themselves. One day, perceiving an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, he slew the oppressor, and buried him in the sand. He supposed that by this deed his brethren would have understood how God would deliver them by his means; but they were blind and unbelieving. Seeing two of his brethren contending on the next day, he remonstrated with them, but the one who did his neighbour wrong retorted by charging him with the murder of the Egyptian; and, fearing the wrath of Pharaoh, he fled to Midian, in the district of Stony Arabia.

While in this country, Moses married Zipporah, a daughter of the priest of Midian, for whose sake he was content to lead a pastoral life. Divine Providence, however, had a mighty task for him to achieve. While thus employed, the Pharaoh from whose wrath he had fled, died, and his successor adopted the same cruel line of policy towards the Hebrews. He grievously oppressed them; and their groans having reached the ears of Jehovah, he "remembered his covenant with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," and resolved to set them free.

Although the Almighty might have accomplished the deliverance of the Hebrews without the aid of any human instrument, yet he resolved to make use of Moses to effect his gracious purpose.

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Accordingly, one day, as the wanderer was tending his flock near Horeb, the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush. The flame burned brightly, while the bush remained unconsumed; and, when Moses advanced towards it, to ascertain the cause of the miracle, the Lord revealed himself in an audible voice to him, and offered to send him on a mission to deliver his oppressed brethren from the hated yoke of Egypt.

From the zeal which Moses had exhibited before he left Egypt, one would have expected to have read that he instantly cast away his shepherd's crook, and, girding up his loins, addressed himself on his journey. His conduct, however, was far otherwise. In order to free himself from the task, he pleaded his own littleness, the ignorance and obstinacy of the people, his want of eloquence, and his slowness of speech; and when these objections were removed by promise and by miracle, he still hesitated, saying, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send;" that is, he begged of the Almighty that he would be pleased to transfer his choice to some one more competent than himself for such high service.

The Divine purpose was not thus to be frustrated. However unwilling his instruments may prove, the Almighty has power to make ~~them~~ work according to his holy will and pleasure. Moses was told that his brother Aaron, who possessed all the eloquence which he deemed necessary, should meet him as he approached Egypt, and should act as his spokesman to the Hebrews, and to Pharaoh.

Having, at length, yielded to the Divine will, Moses hastened to take leave of Jethro, and then advanced towards Egypt. As he was proceeding on his journey, Aaron received the Divine command to go forth and meet his brother in the wilderness, which he did, and they then proceeded together to the land of Goshen.

Although grievously oppressed, the patriarchal government seems still to have subsisted among the Hebrews. Hence we read, that when Moses and Aaron reached the land of Goshen, where their brethren were located, they assembled the elders of the tribes, and declared their mission to them. They concluded by displaying the marvels which Moses had been authorized to work; and the elders were so thoroughly convinced that they had received power from on high to accomplish their deliverance, that "they bowed their heads and worshipped."

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

Moses and Aaron now proceeded to follow the instructions which had been given in the mount. They went to the court of Pharaoh, and boldly demanded the release of the Hebrew nation from his galling fetters. The stern heart of the Egyptian monarch for a long time resisted the demand, and miracle after miracle was performed in his sight, in order to convince him that he could not withstand the power of Jehovah. The land and the people mourned because of the judgments of the Almighty; and it was not till all the first-born of Egypt were struck dead, that the hardened monarch consented to release his captives. Then it was, in the depth of the night, that he called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also." Exod. xii. 31, 32.*

The design of the annexed engraving is to exhibit Moses and Aaron in the performance of their mission before Pharaoh. In it the artist has exhibited the costly, but chastened splendour which surrounded the throne of the obdurate monarch. In the foreground stand the intrepid prophet and his more eloquent brother; on the right, a magician with his divining rod; and, in the centre, the king, crowned with the regal asps, and seated on a throne, whose decorations are symbolic of invincible power and immortal duration.

The authority for the throne is found in an unique bronze specimen preserved in the Louvre; and for the costumes, architecture, etc., in the early monuments of Egypt. The throne affords a singular illustration of the celebrated lion throne of Solomon. The engraving at the end of the article exhibits the Red Sea above Suez, which is the probable point of the passage of the Israelites.

The conduct of Moses before Pharaoh was strikingly intrepid. When the Lord appeared to him in the Mount of Horeb, he had exhibited signs of fear which appeared to be insurmountable. But his strength was evidently rendered sufficient for his arduous task. No sooner had he entered upon his mission, than he assumed a boldness which neither frowns nor threats could intimidate. Although repulsed on many occasions, he still made the same imperative demand, "Let my people go;" and, lifting up his awful rod,

* The reader is referred to "The Death of the First-born," for the minute details of the events referred to in this paragraph.

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH.

beckoned the vengeance of Heaven to descend upon both the monarch and his people.

It has been said by Solomon, that

The wicked flee when no man pursueth :
But the righteous are bold as a lion.

Prov. xxviii. 1.

An illustrious example of the truth of this remark is before the reader. Nor is this an isolated instance. In all ages of the world the righteous have been privileged to stand before the great ones of the earth with holy boldness. Unshaken courage is, indeed, the characteristic of the righteous. By it the martyr has been enabled to embrace the stake, and hold out his hands to the wild beast let loose upon him by his more ferocious fellow man. Divine grace enables a man to brave every evil in life with holy faith and fortitude. Nay, more; it enables him to meet death with rejoicing. As the dread enemy stares him in the face he can exclaim, in a tone of triumph, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. Of what inestimable value, then, is religion! Reader, see that you possess it; see that your eyes are ever looking to the eternal hills from whence alone our help cometh: then, whatever may be your portion below, whatever may be your trials, your happiness will be secured. Thus you will be safe for time and eternity.





DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

(EXODUS XII. 29, 30.)

THE children of Israel, who had long been smarting under the oppressions of Pharaoh in Egypt, were not forgotten by the Almighty. About B.C. 1648, according to Hales, Moses was commissioned, in connexion with his brother Aaron, to bring them out of their house of bondage, by a series of judgments, which humbled that proud nation and its lawless tyrant in a remarkable manner.

Convinced by a miracle of his Divine commission, and having gained over the people of Israel to acquiesce in his intended proceedings, Moses, with Aaron, boldly entered into the presence of Pharaoh, and thus addressed him:—"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Offended at this freedom of speech, Pharaoh haughtily replied: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go," Exod. v. 1, 2. Still undaunted, Moses and Aaron pleaded Israel's cause with earnestness; but their zeal only served to increase the rage of the tyrant, and the oppression of their brethren.

Thus opposed by a rash and weak mortal, the Almighty now said unto Moses: "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh," Exod. vii. 1. And he gave him an assurance that the Egyptians should acknowledge his holy name in the day when he stretched forth his hand upon Egypt, and brought forth his chosen ones from thence.

Moses, therefore, with his brother Aaron, went again to Pharaoh, and demanded the release of the Hebrews. The proud monarch regarded them again with contempt; when Aaron, at the command of Moses, threw down his rod, and it became a serpent. Upon seeing this, Pharaoh sent for his magicians, and they performed a similar act by their enchantments. The rod of Aaron, however, swallowed up their rods, thereby demonstrating the superiority of the first miracle, and the reality of the mission of Moses. Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused to comply with the demand.

The judgments mentioned, and which are known in sacred history as "The ten plagues," now followed in rapid succession. They are thus briefly enumerated:—

DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

The first plague.—As Pharaoh went to pay his adoration to the river Nile, the principal divinity of the Egyptians, he was met by Moses and Aaron; and the latter, stretching his rod over that river, it became blood, and all the fish died: these formed a considerable part of the subsistence of the Egyptians. The change also operated upon all the canals and reservoirs, and even upon that water which had been preserved in vessels of wood and stone for domestic use; so that “there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.”

The second plague.—The river Nile, together with another of the Egyptian gods, the frog, was once more made the instrument of punishment. Myriads of frogs came up from its waters, and overspread the land. They swarmed in the cottage and the palace.

The third plague.—Without giving any notice, the dust of Egypt was now smitten by the rod of Aaron, and it became lice throughout all the land of Egypt upon man and beast.

The fourth plague.—This judgment consisted of a swarm of “flies,” which covered the whole land of Egypt, except the land of Goshen.

The fifth plague.—This plague, which was that of “murrain,” destroyed the cattle of Egypt, save those of the Hebrews.

The sixth plague.—The Almighty now laid his hand upon the persons of the Egyptians. In the presence of Pharaoh, Moses sprinkled ashes of the furnace towards heaven, and they were afflicted with “boils and blains;” and these appearing upon the proverbially clean persons of the magicians, they relinquished that show of rivalry and opposition which they had recently manifested.

The seventh plague.—Pharaoh still continuing unrelenting, Moses stretched forth his rod, and a desolating tempest arose; thunder and hail, so rarely known in Egypt, and fire mingled with the hail, swept over the whole breadth of the land, except Goshen, killing man and beast, destroying the trees, with the standing crops of flax and barley.

The eighth plague.—The locust was now made the instrument of Egypt’s punishment. Although not formed for crossing seas, or for long flights, by the aid of a strong east wind these armies of God winged their way over the Red Sea from Arabia, to perform their mission. They covered all the land, and devoured every herb of the field.

The ninth plague.—In Egypt, where the sun is seldom obscured by a cloud, a thick darkness now prevailed for three days.

DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

This must have been peculiarly afflicting and humiliating to that nation, since their great deity, the sun, obscured of his glory, and darkness, another of their deities, were made the instruments of their punishment.

The tenth plague.—By his obstinacy Pharaoh at length sealed the warrant for a wide-spread destruction. The Almighty resolved to vindicate the cause of Israel. “About midnight,” said he to Moses, “will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die.”

While this judgment was pending, the Israelites were directed to demand articles of silver and gold of the Egyptians. They were also to slay a lamb, of a year old, and without blemish, for every family, the flesh of which was to be eaten with bitter herbs, in haste, with their loins girded, their sandals on their feet, and their staff in their hand. To preserve their habitations from the judgment, moreover, they were directed to sprinkle the side-posts and upper door-posts of each house with the blood of this paschal lamb, that so, when the destroying angel appeared, they might be preserved.

In commemoration of this signal interposition, this solemn rite of the passover was instituted a standing ordinance in the Jewish church. It was designed, also, to shadow forth the Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ, who in the fulness of time should appear as the deliverer of the human race from the thraldom of sin and Satan—a thraldom more fearful in its nature than the bondage of the Israelites.

And now the awful hour of midnight came; and while yet the Israelites were feasting upon this sacrifice, ready to depart from the hated shores of Egypt, the destroying angel went forth and smote all the first-born in the land.

“ From the couches of slumber, ten thousand cries
 Burst forth 'mid the silent dead !
The youth by his living brother lies
 Sightless, and dumb, and dead !
The infant lies cold at his mother's breast !
She had kissed him alive as she sank to rest,
 She awakens—his life hath fled !”

In the sententious and emphatic language used by the sacred historian, “There was not a house where there was not one dead.”

DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

The scene which the artist has designed to illustrate this event has been derived from an anonymous etching, and the costume throughout is from Egyptian authorities. It represents a family of the higher rank of people, and may, as far as it goes, be taken as a faithful picture of the architecture, furniture, and costume of the Egyptians.

The terrible despair depicted in the countenances of the group, bending over the lifeless first-born, fitly shadows forth that which may be imagined sat upon the countenances of the bereaved families of Egypt on that awful night. When death steals into the chambers of the human race under ordinary circumstances, and even at the close of the decay of nature, it is a solemn event; but when he comes suddenly—when no warning is given of his approach—when he visits those whom we love in the vigour of life—the event tells with tenfold power upon the human heart. How terrible must that night have been, therefore, to the Egyptians, when the *first-born*—those loved ones among the children of men—universally perished. The lamentations which followed this awful judgment is emphatically characterized by the inspired penman as “a great cry.” It was not the cry of a family, deep and distressing though it be, but of a nation. How deeply the judgment was felt by Pharaoh and his people is discerned by their conduct towards the Hebrews. Although they had hitherto pertinaciously resisted their departure, struck with dread at the visitation, they were urgent upon them to leave their shores; for they said, “We be all dead men.”

Behold, reader, in this narrative, the power of Jehovah, and admire and adore! See how vain it is for a mortal man to contend with Omnipotence, and, in the contemplation of it, lay down your arms of rebellion. As surely as he desolated Egypt for the opposition which Pharaoh and his people displayed towards him, in retaining his chosen when he demanded their deliverance, so surely shall those who retain their natural enmity against him feel the rod of his anger. It is our truest wisdom, therefore, to bow low at his footstool, and to seek reconciliation with him through the atonement of Christ. This is our only and all-sufficient refuge! “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” John i. 29.



MIRIAM REJOICING OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FOES OF ISRAEL.

MIRIAM REJOICING OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FOES OF ISRAEL.

(EXODUS xv. 20, 21.)

ON the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, their house of bondage, Moses, their appointed leader, instead of taking them the nearest way to the promised land, led them along the skirts of the great wilderness which bounds Egypt and Peträæ to “Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon,” which probably means a strip of land along the western shore of the gulf, between the mountains which skirt the sea and the sea itself. The situation of this large host appeared alarming. On each hand were impassable mountains, while in the front lay a vast expanse of water, and in the rear they were exposed to the attacks of their enemy. The Almighty, however, had given this direction, and to manifest to the people that they marched under his guidance, he “went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud,” and by night “in a pillar of fire.”

The Almighty had given Moses a direct intimation that Pharaoh, when he heard they were “entangled in the land,” and shut in by the wilderness, would follow after them, to his own destruction. Thus it happened. Although Pharaoh, in common with his people, appalled by the death of the first-born, had been urgent upon the children of Israel to depart, yet when it was told him that they had made a decisive move from Etham, and intended to escape altogether from his yoke, he regretted that he had conceded all the points which had been required by Moses, under the Divine direction. Such of his subjects, also, as had once possessed a profitable interest in the labour of the Israelites, and many, probably, who had given to the Hebrews their “jewels of silver, and jewels of gold,” partook of this feeling of concern, and the result was, that Pharaoh collected his forces and marched after them, with a full determination to subdue or destroy them.

The sacred narrative says that Pharaoh mustered six hundred chosen chariots and all the war chariots of Egypt, on this occasion. This corresponds with the sculptures, which show that the Egyptians made great use of chariots in their warlike enterprises. A large body of infantry was also assembled, and their unencum-

MIRIAM REJOICING OVER THE

bered march was, doubtless, much more quickly performed than that of the Israelites, they bearing with them their wives, and their children, with all their goods, and the spoils of the land of Egypt.

The Egyptians were, no doubt, glad to find the Hebrews in a position where they could not, to all human appearance, escape their attack. Hence they do not appear to have been in haste to assail them; for, although they first descried them towards the evening, they encamped for the night without molesting them.

The sight of their ancient foes filled the minds of the Israelites with terror, and forgetting the miracles wrought on their behalf, and heedless of the presence of God, they upbraided Moses thus: "Because," said they, "there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" All unmoved, Moses replied, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Having given them this assurance, Moses had recourse to prayer, and he immediately received a reply: "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." The command was obeyed; and no sooner had they arrived on the shores, than—

the man of God

O'er the wide waters lifts his mighty rod,
And onward treads; the circling waves retreat,
In hoarse, deep murmurs, from his holy feet;
And the chased surges, ily roaring, show
The hard wet sand and coral hills below.

Through these waters the Hebrews passed onward. The whole host, under the guidance of their leader, again marched fearlessly towards Canaan.

Although Pharaoh had been a witness of the wonder-working power of God, and must therefore have known that he could yet perform a miracle on the behalf of his people, still he appears to have conceived that he held them within the grasp of his power. As soon, therefore, as he discovered that the Israelites were in motion, he was determined to follow them; and his infatuation was such that, regardless of the billows thus supernaturally upreared, and of the miraculous cloud before him, he had the bold daring

DESTRUCTION OF THE FOES OF ISRAEL.

to pass into the bed of the sea after them. The moment of vengeance soon appeared. The Israelites had gained the opposite shore, and the whole host of Pharaoh were hastening through the deep, when lo !

Again the prophet stretched his dreadful wand :
With one wild crash the thundering waters sweep,
And all is waves—a dark and lonely deep ;
And strange and sad the whispering surges bore
The groans of Egypt to Arabia's shore.

HEBER.

The whole host of Pharaoh perished in the mighty waters ; “ there remained not so much as one of them.”

At the sight of the destruction of their foes, the Israelites feared and believed the Lord, and owned the mission of Moses, while the prophet himself, as he contemplated the power and the goodness of God, uttered by Divine inspiration a most magnificent ode. On this occasion, also, the first instance is recorded of a custom among the Hebrew women, of celebrating with dances and timbrels any remarkable event of joy or triumph. They were now led by Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, who, with her friends, taking part as a chorus in the song of the men, answered :—

Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously ;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The productions of the ancient masters on this subject, usually represent Miriam and her companions dressed in Turkish silks, and their instruments French kettle drums, Italian tambourines, and a kind of flute of equal diameter throughout. Such, for example, is the celebrated picture of Jordaens. In the accompanying picture, Miriam and her friends are represented in the act of celebrating their deliverance by singing and dancing to the sound of the oriental timbrel, which nearly resembles our own instrument called the tambourine, and which is at the present day much used in the east. The authority for the leading features of the design is an early Egyptian painting, engraved in the great work of Rosellini, of a company of Egyptian females engaged in a scene of triumph. In that picture, it is remarkable that the women who sing, but do not play, bear branches of trees in their hands, a national peculiarity which has been preserved in the drawing. Having mingled four hundred years with the people of Egypt, it may well be supposed that the Hebrews derived many customs

MIRIAM REJOICING OVER THE FOES OF ISRAEL.

from them, and this among the rest. No intimation is given, indeed, of such a custom among the Hebrews, prior to the date of their bondage, whence it appears certain that they copied the dance of triumph from the usages of the Egyptians. The reader will observe that Moses occupies a prominent situation in the centre of the picture.

The narrative, thus illustrated, is admirably calculated to impress the mind of the reader with holy awe at the wonder-working power of Jehovah. Nothing is too difficult for his mighty hand to accomplish. The ever restless waters confessed his presence, and for once their undulation ceased. What an extraordinary exhibition of the Divine power! The very wind which was employed on the occasion was in itself miraculous, for there is no such thing as a natural east wind in all this region. During one half of the year, the monsoon blows steadily from the north, and during the other half as steadily from the south. The stupendous nature of the miracle is seen in the effect it had upon the Hebrews themselves. The sacred historian says, that when they saw the "great work," they "feared and believed the Lord and his servant Moses." Nor was the effect of a momentary nature. In after ages, historians, prophets, poets, and didactic writers, refer more frequently and more emphatically to this miracle, than to any other recorded in the Old Testament. Their aspirations of praise are blended with the song of Moses and the chorus of Miriam. The burden of their rejoicings has been thus described by a modern poet:—

Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea !
Jehovah has triumphed ! his people are free !
Sing !—for the pride of the tyrant is broken ;
 His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave,
How vain was their boasting ! the Lord hath but spoken,
 And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea !
Jehovah has triumphed ! his people are free !
Praise to the Conqueror ! praise to the Lord !
His word was our arrow, his breath was our sword !
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
 Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride ?
For the Lord hath looked out from his pillar of glory,
 And all her brave thousands are dash'd in the tide.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea !
Jehovah has triumphed ! his people are free !



THE HIGH PRIEST AARON OFFERING INCENSE ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR

THE HIGH-PRIEST AARON OFFERING INCENSE ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR.

(Exod. xxx. 1—10.)

As the children of Israel were journeying through the wilderness, in their route from Egypt to Canaan, their leader, Moses, was called up into the Mount Sinai, to receive the law by which they were to be governed, from the lips of the Almighty. He ascended it in the midst of thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud, which veiled the Holy One of Israel and his prophet from the gaze of the assembled and awe-stricken multitude.

Among the ceremonial statutes ordained on this occasion, none were more important than that connected with the altar of incense, and which reads thus:—" And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim-wood shalt thou make it. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; four-square shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord."

The high-priest was an important personage among the Hebrews.

THE HIGH-PRIEST AARON OFFERING INCENSE

His functions were two-fold, political and sacerdotal, in which latter character he is represented in the engraving.

The sacerdotal duties of the high-priest were such as required his presence daily at the sanctuary. He alone could perform the most solemn acts of service; whence he was, in some sort, the mediator between God and the people. It was his to make atonement for the sins of the whole nation: it was his, also, to take the counsel of God on occasions of importance or difficulty, by Urim and Thummim.

On the great day of atonement, the high-priest wore a dress entirely of white linen; but his official dress, in which he appears in the engraving, consisted of the following articles:—

1. *The coat.* This was an inner robe with sleeves to the wrist.
2. *The drawers.* These appear to have reached from above the waist to the knee. They had no opening, either before or behind, and were bound round the body by a sash.
3. *The girdle of the ephod.* This seems to have been used for the purpose of confining the ephod round the body of the high-priest.
4. *The robe.* This was a long linen gown of light blue, reaching to the middle of the leg, or perhaps to the ankle. It was made all in one piece, and was adorned by a fringe of pomegranates and bells.
5. *The ephod.* This was an embroidered frock, worn over the coat and robe.
6. *The breastplate.* The breastplate was a piece of rich cloth, set with the following twelve precious stones:—a sardius, or cornelian; a topaz, or modern chrysolite; a carbuncle, the noble garnet of Theophrastus; an emerald; a sapphire; a diamond; a ligure, or hyacinth; an agate; an amethyst; a beryl, or aqua marine; an onyx; and a jasper.
7. *The mitre.* This seems to have been a turban of fine cotton, ornamented on the front with a plate of pure gold, on which was inscribed, “Holiness to the Lord.”
8. *The girdle of needlework.* This was a sash of fine twined linen, embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet, and which went round the body over the coat.*

The usual representations of the high-priest offering incense on the golden altar are derived from the popish mass. The altar, the censer, and the priestly vestments are, indeed, decidedly popish. Their prototypes are common in all the Romish places of worship, and may be traced in the illuminations of the papal Fathers.

* For a more detailed account of the dress of the high-priest, the reader is referred to “Eastern Arts and Antiquities,” published by the Religious Tract Society.

ON THE GOLDEN ALTAR.

Such representations, especially in the case of educational books, should be carefully avoided, as they tend to invest the characters of Scripture with an air of popery. In designing for Scripture histories, the artist should seek his materials in the treasure-houses of antiquity, and in the unchanging usages and localities of oriental nations. The "mass," and the "great masters," who were its devotees, will only help him to perpetuate their glowing falsehoods, and to prepare the way for greater.

In designing the annexed engraving, the artist had three things especially to consider: 1. The vestments of the high-priest; 2. the form of the censer; and, 3. the style of the altar.

For the vestments the artist has taken the minute description of Scripture, noticing the corresponding dresses and embellishments in the Egyptian costumes, with which, doubtless, they in the main agreed.

The censer has been designed from a comparison of Egyptian and Roman examples, both of which were long-handled shovel-like spoons, with various degrees of decoration. In using them, the priest took the handle "in his hand," and extending the bowl, or shovel end, placed it over the flame of the altar, till the incense it contained ignited, and then, slowly pouring it on the fire, "burnt it before the Lord."* This is a widely different proceeding to the fumigation of a pontiff, or "an altar," by the air-swung scent-pots of the popish choristers; and, if properly understood, it throws much light on many expressions of Scripture, which are otherwise difficult.

The altar has been designed chiefly from what we believe to be a representation of it on the arch of Titus, assisted by the description given by the sacred penman, which, being so minute, can scarcely be mistaken. It was very small, being little more than half a yard square; but it was higher in proportion than the other altars, being twice as high as it was broad. It had "horns," with an ornamental rim, or "crown," and it also had rings with staves, by which it was carried about from place to place. Concerning the word rendered "top," there are different opinions. The Septuagint and Vulgate make it "a grate," while others suppose it was a vessel containing fire upon the altar. Perhaps those are correct who conclude, that, as the Hebrew word from whence it is derived

* It is a curious fact, that the sculptures recently discovered in Yutacan, Central America, display the same form of censer.

THE HIGH-PRIEST AARON OFFERING INCENSE.

means, in other places, the flat roof of a house, so by “the top” is meant merely the upper surface of the altar itself. This reading, in truth, agrees best with the context, the intention of which is to describe the whole altar as overlaid with gold. As stated in the text, the altar was placed before “the vail;” that is, the vail separating the most holy from the holy place. Every morning and evening the high-priest filled his censer with fire from the brazen altar, and, introducing the incense, went into the holy place, and set the censer upon the altar.

This narrative is well calculated to point the Christian reader to the great High-Priest of his profession, Jesus Christ, of whom the Jewish high-priest was a type. He is the Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises. The Christian looks upon him as such, and the language of his heart to his fellow pilgrims on earth is that of the apostle: “Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised.” Heb. x. 19—23.

The following is a copy from the sculptures at Karnac of an Egyptian king, as high-priest, offering incense in a censer.





CALEB'S DAUGHTER SOLICITING WATER-SPRINGS.

CALEB'S DAUGHTER SOLICITING WATER-SPRINGS WITH HER GIFT OF LANDS.

• (JOSHUA XV. 18, 19; AND JUDGES I. 14, 15.)

ON the death of Moses, who was denied an entrance into the promised land for his conduct at the waters of Meribah, the Almighty appointed Joshua his successor, and gave him this commission:—"Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded me: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that self, she lest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest," Josh. i. 2—9.

Obedient to the Divine command, Joshua girded on his sword, and prepared for contest with the idolatrous Canaanites. Passing over Jordan, whose waters opened a pathway for his feet, he encompassed Jericho, which he finally burned with fire, after having "destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword," Josh. vi. 21. The same fate awaited Ai and its inhabitants, with twenty-nine other ancient kingdoms, or distinct governments, of Canaan, as enumerated in Josh. xii. 9—24.

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All these conquests were made within five years after the passage of the Jordan. So completely were the inhabitants of Canaan prostrated before the power of Israel, that, although there was much land yet remaining to be actually possessed, Joshua now received command to divide the country by lot, which he did in the year B.C. 1602.

Among the noted warriors of Israel was the aged Caleb, of whom we find honourable mention. As Moses approached the confines of Canaan, he selected one man out of every tribe to go forward, and examine the quality of the land and the strength of its inhabitants. On their return, ten out of this number declared it to be not only a barren land, incapable of supporting those who possessed it, but represented the inhabitants as being unconquerable. Not so did Joshua and Caleb. Although the Israelites, believing the evil report, rebelled, and formed the resolution of appointing a leader to conduct them back to their bondage in Egypt, they, acting for the two leading tribes of Judah and Ephraim, fearlessly and faithfully represented the land as a good land, and the inhabitants as easily to be conquered. Still the Israelites disbelieved them; and they were about to stone these faithful men, when the glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud above the tabernacle. From thence he issued a decree, that all the men above twenty years of age when they left Egypt, should be cut off from their portion of the rich inheritance, which they so readily intended to forego, and leave their bones amidst the sands and solitudes of the desert, Joshua and Caleb only excepted.

Nor was it a prolongation of days alone which was promised to Joshua and Caleb on this occasion. To the latter, especially, Moses declared that the land in which he beheld the gigantic Anakim should be given to him for a possession, "because he had wholly followed Jehovah his God." Accordingly, before the internal distribution of the territories was made to particular families, Caleb presented himself before the assembly, and reminded it of this promise. As he made this plea, he thankfully acknowledged that the Lord had, according to his word, kept him alive for forty-five years, while the generation to which he belonged had perished; and that now, although fourscore and five years old, he was as strong, and as able for council and war, as in that day when Moses sent him to explore the land. He added, that although the land

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promised him was again in the possession of the Anakim,* and the towns they held were very strong, he was confident that God would be with him, and enable him to drive them out, if the grant was confirmed.

The assembly, convinced of the justice of Caleb's claim, confirmed these possessions to him; and he succeeded, not only in expelling three chiefs of the Anakim who held possession of Hebron, but in obtaining the other strong town of Debir, which was upon the lands assigned to him.

A circumstance connected with the capture of Debir illustrates some of the customs of the time. Caleb caused it to be publicly known, that he would give his daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who should take this place for him. The enterprise was undertaken by Othniel, the son of Caleb's brother, who had, by custom, the best right to the hand of his cousin, and would have incurred disgrace if he had allowed her to be taken away by another.† Othniel succeeded, and received his reward.

By this free grant of Caleb, Achsah obtained some land. This land, however, was a south land, dry, and generally barren; whence she was not satisfied with her marriage portion. She advised her husband to ask for a field, probably some particular field which belonged to Caleb, and adjacent to the land already bestowed upon them. Othniel deemed it most prudent that Achsah should solicit the boon herself, she being most likely to prevail. Accordingly, Achsah took the opportunity, when her father brought her home to the house of her husband, to make this request. Alighting from her ass, in token of respect and reverence to her aged father, she gave him occasion to ask her what she wanted. Caleb, alive to the interests of his daughter, asked what she desired. Achsah replied, "Give me a blessing," or, "some gracious gift of land," "for thou hast given me a south land," (a land barren and dry,) "give me also springs of water." Achsah gained her object. Her

* The gigantic Anakim in and about Hebron had been extirpated or expelled by the captain of Israel. Some of them, however, had sought a refuge in the country of the Philistines, and many of these, probably while the attention of Joshua was engaged in the affairs of the north, had re-established themselves in parts of their ancient seats.

† This custom, the absolute right of a father to dispose of his daughter, or to propose her as the reward of some perilous enterprise, still exists in oriental countries.

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father granted what she asked, and gave her the upper and the nether springs.

Such is the scene intended to be represented in the subjoined drawing. In it Caleb figures as an aged warrior, like those seen in the Egyptian monuments. Achsah, having been brought up in the desert, exhibits the habits of her life in a robust frame, and a costume suited to the climate; while Othniel is drawn in the garb and with the accoutrements of a traveller, copied from what is supposed to be an Egyptian painting of an Israelite. The pole behind indicates the presence of a well, which forms the burden of Achsah's request, land being of little importance in that country without "springs of water."

The conduct of Achsah, in seeking these "springs of water," affords a beautiful example for mankind. Earth is to them but a south land, dry and barren. Even its richest pleasures afford them no real happiness: after partaking of them, the immortal soul is left unsatisfied. Where, then, can man find solid good? Only in partaking of the waters of life, which proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb.

The pure and blessed stream is open now,
The fountain is set free;
Here may'st thou stoop, and lave thy fevered brow—
Here bow the weary knee.

Lo! by this stream thou may'st repair thy loss
Of strength, and safely drink;
For, hallowing its pure waters, stands the cross
Upon its quiet brink.

* * * *

Follow the windings of that holy stream,
Although its course is traced
Through deserts scorched by passion's lightning gleam,
Through sorrow's desolate waste.

And thou shalt find it widen in its course,
And merge, all free from strife,
With gentle majesty and quiet force
Into the streams of life.

M. A. BROWNE.



BOAZ AND RUTH.

BOAZ AND RUTH.

(RUTH II. 8.)

DURING the period when the judges ruled over Israel—the precise date is uncertain—a famine occurred, which compelled an inhabitant of the town of Bethlehem of Judah to remove, with his wife and two sons, into the land of Moab, which, in consequence of the victories under Ehud, appears to have been in some degree subjected to the Israelites.* This man's name was Elimelech, his wife's Naomi, and his sons' names were Mahlon and Chilion. Soon after they arrived there, Elimelech died, and his two sons, who had married Ruth and Orpah, daughters of the Moabites, after the lapse of about ten years, were also buried in Moab, leaving no issue.

Thus deprived of her earthly protectors, and household comforts, and having heard that “the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread,” Naomi resolved to return to her native land. This resolution she disclosed to her daughters-in-law, and both expressed their attachment to her, and their willingness to accompany her to Bethlehem. At first Naomi allowed them to follow the bent of their inclinations; but when they had proceeded part of the way she intreated them to return, expressing her gratitude for the kindness they had shown to herself and her deceased sons.

The attachment of both Ruth and Orpah seems to have been great, for “they lifted up their voice and wept.” But the love of Ruth was the most sincere. While Orpah kissed Naomi and returned, Ruth, in the emphatic language of Scripture, “clave unto her.”

Still, Naomi was unwilling to take Ruth from her country and her friends, and she therefore urged her to follow the example of Orpah. But Ruth had been instructed in the worship of the God of Israel, the Fountain of life and happiness, and had embraced the faith of Naomi. Her attachment to her mother-in-law was, therefore, founded on the principles of religion. Hence her touching and beautiful answer to Naomi:—“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die,”

* See Judges iii. 12—30.

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and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Naomi could not resist this touching earnestness, so on they travelled to Bethlehem.

Worn down by the griefs which her threefold loss had inflicted upon her, when Naomi arrived at Bethlehem, her old neighbours crowded around her, and, gazing at her features, asked, in the language of astonishment, "Is this Naomi?" Her reply abundantly satisfied them that she was the selfsame person. In the depth of her anguish, which was softened by pious submission to the will of God, she exclaimed, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

When Naomi and Ruth arrived at Bethlehem it was barley harvest; and during the ingathering of the harvest, the law of Moses directed very liberal treatment of the children of want. The corners of the fields were to be left unreaped; the owner was prohibited from gleaning therein; if a sheaf was accidentally left, then it was not to be fetched away, but left for the poor; and the privilege of following the reapers, to pick up the straggling ears, was to be granted to those persons the owner might wish to befriend. Ruth was acquainted with this benign law, and she solicited Naomi's permission to glean a few ears after him in whose sight she might find favour, in order to relieve their common wants.

The day had been when Naomi would, probably, have refused to comply with a request that implied such a state of poverty; but affliction had so effectually humbled her that she readily gave her consent. Accordingly, Ruth set out on her lowly, but honest employment, and a kind Providence directed her to that part of the field—the arable land not being inclosed in the east—which belonged to Boaz, a near relation of Elimelech. From his servant, who, according to oriental custom, was set over the reapers, she obtained permission to glean.

In the course of the day, Boaz himself came to view the progress of the harvest, and, after the usual devout salutations of this "mighty man of wealth" and his reapers—"Jehovah be with you!" and "Jehovah bless thee!"—his eye lighted upon Ruth, and inquiring who she was, the overseer informed him that it was the Moabitish damsel who had shown such friendship for Naomi. It

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would appear, that Boaz had heard of the circumstance, and addressing himself to her, he exclaimed: "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn." Ruth was astonished at this kindness, and fell at his feet, expressing her thanks and surprise that he should show such favour to a stranger. Boaz replied: "It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." Ruth answered: "Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."

It is the above affecting and interesting scene that the artist has attempted to delineate. In doing this, as the days of Boaz were those of patriarchal simplicity, in all that concerns rural life in the oriental countries, he has taken the analogy of the present inhabitants of Mesopotamia and the adjacent regions—whose costume, manners, and customs, undoubtedly shadow forth that of the ancients—to furnish the materials for the picture, which has been chiefly derived from the celebrated painting by Schopia. The light costume of Ruth contrasts agreeably with the weightier dresses of the men, whose duty it was to keep watch by night, as well as to labour by day.

The meeting of Ruth with Boaz proved a providential event. When she returned home in the evening, with the result of her day's gleaning, about an ephah, or nearly an English bushel, of barley, Naomi was anxious to know how it happened that her labours had been so prosperous. Ruth related all the occurrences of the day, and Naomi, in the fulness of her heart, exclaimed, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead." She added, in explanation, that Boaz was a near kinsman of the family, and advised that, according to his expressed wish, Ruth should confine her gleaning to his fields.

Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz, not only to the end of the barley harvest, but of the wheat harvest.* At the end of that time, Naomi, anxious for the welfare of the devoted Ruth, acquainted her with the thoughts that had lately filled her heart. She said that Boaz was so near of kin that he came under the operation of that law among the Hebrews which required, that when a man died childless the next of kin should marry his widow. Accordingly she directed Ruth to change her attire, and to enter the threshing-floor—where she expected Boaz, in accordance with oriental custom, would repose in the evening—for the purpose of claiming his protection. All happened as Naomi had foreseen. Boaz entered the threshing-floor, and acknowledged the claim, at the same time paying this glowing tribute to her virtues: “Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.” He added, however, that there was a person in the town more nearly related to her deceased husband than himself, and that on him properly the duty devolved; but if he declined it, then it fell to himself, and he would not shrink from performing it. This kinsman declined it, and Boaz took Ruth to be his wife. Her fidelity to Naomi was rewarded; she was raised from a state of abject want to be the wife of a wealthy Bethlehemite, and thus became the ancestor of David and of the Messiah.

The dutiful conduct and the unshaken faith of Ruth afford a beautiful example to her sex throughout all generations. Well would it be, indeed, if all would follow her example, if all would submit themselves to the guidance of their parents, and “cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart.” They might then rest assured, that a blessing would attend them from heaven, as it did Ruth, and that not only in this life, but that which is to come. But, alas! what a different aspect does the face of society wear in these our days. In too many cases, filial duty is scarcely more than a name, and the God of Israel is forgotten. The vanities of this world, transient and unsatisfactory though they be, have yet charms sufficient to allure the mind from all that is truly lovely and enduring. There are many Orpahs, who love their pleasures better than God and their parents.

* In Palestine, as in Egypt, barley is gathered in before the wheat, and not after, as in our own country.



SAMSON IN CAPTIVITY.

SAMSON IN CAPTIVITY.

(JUDGES XVI.)

THE Israelites had not long been in the possession of the promised land before they relapsed into idolatry. They forsook their King, Jehovah, and were given over by him successively to the yoke of Mesopotamia, Moab, Canaan, Midian, and Ammon. When they cried for deliverance, however, he raised up judges to rescue them from these oppressors. They were freed from their yokes, and the land had rest.

Thus taught by experience that punishment is the natural concomitant of rebellion, had the Israelites been wise they would, henceforth, have cleaved to their Divine Ruler with full purpose of heart. But history unfolds the fact, that neither wisdom, obedience, nor gratitude, were their characteristics. During the peaceable administrations of Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, they again relapsed into idolatry, and drew down on themselves a rigorous servitude to their western foes, the Philistines, who oppressed them for forty years; that is, from B.C. 1222 to B.C. 1182.

Yet, while it pleased Jehovah to punish his revolted subjects, tenderly caring for them, he provided for the commencement of their deliverance from this galling servitude on a future day. About the same time that the Philistines were permitted to oppress them, his angel appeared to the wife of Manoah, a Danite, and promised to her a son, who was to be a Nazarite, or a person consecrated to God from the womb, and that in time he should *begin* to deliver Israel from their yoke.

The promises of Jehovah are ever fulfilled. In due season the woman gave birth to a son, who was called Samson, and who manifested the most extraordinary bodily powers in his early youth.

It was in the twentieth year of the age of Samson, which was also the twentieth year of the bondage to the Philistines, that his administration commenced. Samson sought a wife among the Philistines. He went, with his parents, to Timnath, to seek her in marriage, and it was on this journey that he gave the first recorded indication of the prodigious strength with which he was endowed: without any weapon he slew a young and fierce lion, by which he was assailed.

The proposal made was favourably received by the parents of

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the damsel sought in marriage; and, when the usual period between such a proposal and the celebration of the marriage had elapsed, namely, one month, Samson, accompanied by his parents, went again to Timnath to claim his bride. On his way he turned aside to see what had become of the carcase of the lion he had slain on the former journey, and he found only its clean skeleton, partially covered with the undevoured hide, and tenanted by a swarm of bees.

In oriental countries it was usual, at this period, for the young men assembled at wedding feasts to amuse themselves by proposing riddles. Samson proposed the following:—

Out of the eater came forth meat,
And out of the strong came forth sweetness. Judges xiv. 14.

This riddle was suggested to Samson by his adventure with the lion; and it proved so intricate, that his hearers could not offer even a probable solution. For three days they vainly tried to discover its meaning; and, at length, rather than incur the heavy forfeiture of “thirty shirts and thirty suits of raiment,” they applied to the bride, and threatened destruction to her family if she did not extract the required solution from Samson, and unfold it to them. The bride did this, and on the seventh day, when the given time for the reply was about to expire, the guests said to him:—

What is sweeter than honey ?
And what is stronger than a lion ? Judges xiv. 18.

And now commenced the fierce struggle between Samson and the Philistines. Convinced that they could only have obtained the solution by tampering with his bride, he went and slew thirty Philistines, near Ascalon, and gave their raiment to those who had expounded his riddle. At the same time he left his wife in anger, and returned home.

The breach thus made gradually became widened. Some time after, Samson returned to visit his wife, but found her married to his friend who had been his brideman at the wedding. Her father offered him his youngest daughter in lieu of his wife, but Samson rejected the offer with disdain, and bent his thoughts upon revenge. He collected three hundred jackals, and, fastening them tail to tail, and placing a firebrand between them, he let them loose upon the standing corn of the Philistines, which, being ripe, was quickly consumed: so also were their vines and their olive trees.

The Philistines now saw that they had no common enemy to deal with, and they ferociously burned his wife and her father with

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fire. Samson's wrath was much increased by this cruel act. He took an opportunity which offered of discomfiting, with much slaughter, a considerable number of men belonging to that nation, and then withdrew to a strong rock, called Etam, in the tribe of Judah.

To this rock Samson was pursued by a large body of Philistines, and their presence so alarmed the Judaites, that they bound him with two new ropes, in order to give him over into the hands of his enemies. He was thus led to their camp, but, as the Philistines raised a triumphant shout against him, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him," and he burst his strong bands asunder as easily as if they had been tow burned with fire, and seizing the jawbone of an ass, which lay at hand, he routed their host, and slew many of their number. Those only lived who fled.

The next exploit of Samson was at Gaza. Blinded by that passion which "hath cast down many wounded; yea, hath slain many strong men," he exposed himself to the vengeance of the uncircumcised. He visited a harlot in that city, and, his arrival becoming known, the gates were closed to prevent his escape, and a strong guard was placed there to surprise and kill him in the morning. Samson, however, anticipated their plan, and rising at midnight, he went boldly to the gate, forced it from its place, and carried it off entire, posts, bars, and all, to the top of a hill near Hebron.

Samson, therefore, was invincible against the hosts of the Philistines; but he was conquered by treachery. Having formed a shameful alliance with a woman in the vale of Sorek, named Delilah, the Philistines bribed her to discover the secret wherein his great strength lay. Thrice he deceived her, but at length, overcome by her intreaties, he revealed the secret. He told her that he was a Nazarite from his birth, and that if he left that state by cutting off his hair, which had never yet been shorn or shaven, his strength would depart from him. Delilah saw that he had now told her the truth, and, while yet he was asleep on her knees, a man whom she had sent for, shaved off the luxuriant tresses of his hair, and his strength departed from him. The Philistines now took and bound him; they put out both his eyes, and then took him down to Gaza, and employed him to grind in the prison house.

Such is the scene which the artist has represented, and it gives an opportunity of exhibiting the instrument of Samson's punishment—the *mill* of Scripture. This machine, notwithstanding its

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importance to an agricultural people like the Hebrews, has never, it is believed, been truly represented. That which is usually adopted is the *hand kern* of Wales, but this is very unlike the reality. The mills of oriental countries and of classical antiquity are identical. Examples of the former are found in Chinese and Hindoo paintings, and of the latter on altars sacred to Ceres. The annexed engraving, which coincides with these representations, has been taken from a modern oriental instrument. That at the close exhibits Roman mill-stones found at Sandy Hill, Bedfordshire, and now in the United Service Museum.

Scripture does not inform us how long Samson endured this captivity; but it relates, what is more pleasing, that while in his “prison house” he repented, and that, by this repentance, his condition of Nazariteship was in some degree renewed: it pleased God, with the growth of his hair to renew his strength.

The Philistines soon experienced the fatal effects of the renewal of the strength of Samson. Celebrating a feast to Dagon their god, who they supposed had delivered their enemy into their hands, they called for him to make them sport, as they viewed him from the roof of their temple. For some time he was thus exposed to their mockeries and insults; but, at length, the blind hero desired the lad who led and held him by the hand to let him rest himself against the pillars which sustained the chief weight of the building. Thus placed, Samson breathed a prayer, and grasping the pillars with his mighty arms, he cried, “Let me die with the Philistines;” the pillars gave way; the roof fell in; and those who were above and below were destroyed.

The reader may learn from this narrative the fatal effects of sinful pleasure. It stripped the mighty Samson of his strength! How careful, then, and how watchful should we be against its siren charms! our eyes should ever be looking upward for grace to withstand temptation.



THE ANOINTING OF SAUL KING OVER ISRAEL.

(1 SAMUEL x. 1.)

THE Hebrew state was governed by judges, appointed by the Almighty, from the earliest ages to the days of Samuel the prophet. This holy man, growing “old and grey-headed,” appointed his sons, Joel and Abiah, to act for him at Bethel and Beersheba. Their conduct in this situation was oppressive. They walked not in the ways of their father, but “turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment,” 1 Sam. viii. 3. This misconduct of the sons of the prophet, with his own advancing age, and the seemingly unsettled state in which the government would be left at his death, induced the elders of Israel to resort to Samuel at Ramah, and to demand of him that a king should be appointed over them.

Samuel rebuked the elders for their conduct, and told them of the Divine disapprobation. At the same time, he represented to them the burdens they would have to bear under a king, and warned them that he might be led to imitate other oriental monarchs, and to disregard the law of Jehovah.

The picture drawn by Samuel exhibits in a lively manner the character of the monarchies which at that time existed in the east, and the principles of which prevail in the east even to this day. He reminded them, that the heaviest exaction would be made upon their persons and estates for the support of the government, which powerfully contrasts with the mild character of that service which their King, Jehovah, had required under the theocracy. Their king would take their young men, and employ them as charioteers, horsemen, and even runners before and about his chariot; his army would require the services of their young men, and he would take them to till his ground, and to make his instruments of war, and the furniture of his chariots; he would, further, take the daughters of Israel to minister to the luxuries of the court as cooks, confectioners, and bakers; he would deprive them of the best of their male and female servants, as well as their cattle, and put them to his own work; and he would take the best of their fields, vineyards, olive-yards, and the tenth of their seeds, and their sheep, for the support of his court and his servants. The

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prophet concludes thus emphatically: “ And ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.” See 1 Sam. viii.

It might have been supposed that this discouraging representation would have silenced the clamours of the elders for a king. Their purpose, however, was too firmly fixed to be thus shaken. They persisted in the demand, and it was reluctantly conceded. The Almighty had given to the Israelites the prophet Samuel, in his favour; and he now gave them Saul, in his wrath.

About this time, Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, went forth to seek some strayed asses belonging to his father. His search for three days was fruitless; at the end of which time, finding himself near Ramah, the residence of Samuel, he resolved to go and consult him.

It was, and is still usual in the east, for any one who presents himself before a man in authority to take some gift in his hands, however small, perhaps only a fruit or a flower, in token of his respect and homage. All that Saul possessed was the fourth part of a shekel of silver, in value about sevenpence-halfpenny, with which he presented himself before the prophet. Saul was received with particular notice and honour. It had been revealed to Samuel, that on that day and that hour the future king of Israel would present himself before him, and he acted according to the Divine direction, unmindful of the honour and interests of his own family. Samuel assured Saul that his father had found the asses, and began now to be anxious about his son. Still he urged him to stay with him over the night, and partake of a feast which he had provided, at the same time slightly intimating to him his coming advancement to the throne of Israel, which was received with much modesty.

Thirty of the principal persons of the place had been invited to partake of the prophet’s entertainment on this occasion; and when they arrived, Samuel conducted Saul to the room in which they were assembled, and led him to the corner seat of honour, and when the meat was served, he directed that the shoulder, which was the most honourable joint, should be set before him.

Thus the evening passed, and the guests dispersed. Being summer, a bed was made for Saul on the housetop, where Samuel long held communion with him. Early in the morning, the prophet called Saul, and walked forth with him on his journey. As

THE ANOINTING OF SAUL KING OVER ISRAEL.

he passed along, Samuel directed the servant to pass before him; and then the prophet, desiring Saul to stand still, that he might show him the purposes of God, took a vial of oil and poured it upon his head, thereby anointing him captain over the Lord's inheritance.

Such is the scene represented in the annexed engraving. In it the artist has adopted the dress of the santon as an authority for that of the prophet, while the nomadic sovereign has been dressed from the analogies furnished by the Bedouin Arab. The chief points of interest in the design are, the attitude of Saul and the mode of applying the oil. In these particulars the artist has been guided by Egyptian sculptures and paintings, which invariably show the posture of the recipient to be a sitting one, and the act of anointing to be performed by pouring the oil on the head from a vessel.

Among the Hebrews, there were two sorts of unction. One of these was private, which was only a prophetic symbol, or intimation, that the persons who were thus anointed should eventually govern the kingdom. Such is the instance set before the reader. The other anointing took place after the new king had been solemnly recognised by the people. Thus Saul was re-anointed at Gilgal, before all the people, when the kingdom was confirmed to him in the midst of mighty thunderings, called by the prophet at the time of wheat harvest, as a sign of the Divine displeasure against them for asking a king.

Saul therefore was made king over Israel. His conduct at first was exemplary; but he soon disobeyed the command of Jehovah. His first act of rebellion was in sparing Agag, the king of the Amalekites, with the sheep and the oxen, and the chief of the things, which should have been utterly destroyed, according to the word of the Lord. For this disobedient act he forfeited the kingdom of Israel, which was promised to David, who shortly after received the prophetic symbol, or intimation, that he should one day govern Israel, from the same hands which had imparted it to Saul.

The after-life of this first monarch of Israel was one continued scene of turbulence, disquietude, envy, malice, rage, and revenge. He felt that the Lord had departed from him, and instead of seeking pardon, he plunged himself into the excess of crime. At length, defeated on the heights of Gilboa by those inveterate foes of Israel,

THE ANOINTING OF SAUL KING OVER ISRAEL.

the Philistines, in order to avoid falling into their hands, he put an end to his troubled life by his own act.

Such is the evil nature of sin. Every act of compliance with it facilitates a second compliance, and every step to depravity is made with less reluctance, and thus the descent to a life of moral turpitude is perpetually accelerating. It has written within and without, "Lamentations, and mourning, and woe." The lesson we should learn from this narrative is, to avoid the beginnings of sin, and to walk humbly with God. It is only by thus acting that we can expect to enjoy happiness, either in this world or the next. The poet says:—

The first sure symptom of a mind in health
Is rest of heart, and pleasure felt at home.
False pleasure from abroad her joys imports ;
Rich from within, and self-sustained the true :
The true is fixed, and solid as a rock ;
Slippery the false, and tossing as the wave.
'Tis love o'erflowing makes an angel here ;
Such angels, all entitled to repose
On Him who governs all. Though tempest frowns,
Though nature shakes, how soft to lean on Heaven !
To lean on Him on whom archangels lean !
With inward eyes, and silent as the grave,
They stand, collecting every beam of thought,
'Till their hearts kindle with divine delight ;
For all their thoughts, like angels seen of old
In Israel's dream, come from, and go to heaven.

YOUNG.



DAVID AND GOLIATH.

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

(1 SAMUEL xvii.)

DAVID, "the man after God's own heart," and "the sweet psalmist of Israel," was the youngest son of Jesse, and the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth. His early days were spent in the rural occupation of a shepherd. Thus, indeed, was he employed when Samuel the prophet came to Bethlehem, by the Divine command, to anoint one of the sons of Jesse king over Israel in the room of Saul, who had disobeyed the commands of Jchovah.

The shepherd with his crook appears a very unlikely person to be chosen to wield a sceptre. But the Almighty seeth not as man seeth, nor worketh as man worketh. In the psalmist's own words, which are the fruits of his experience—

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill ;
That he may set him with princes,
Even with the princes of his people.

Psa. cxiii. 7, 8.

Eliab, the eldest son of Jesse, stood before the prophet, and observing his noble bearing, Samuel exclaimed, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." He was soon undeceived. The Spirit of inspiration taught him that God looks not on the countenance or the stature of a man, but on the heart. So Eliab was rejected, and Jesse causing six other warlike sons to pass before the prophet, they were rejected likewise. Apparently perplexed, the prophet inquired whether these were all the sons of Jesse. Being informed that the youngest was with the sheep, he sent for him, and when the youth appeared, at the command of God, Samuel took the horn of oil, and poured it upon his head in the sight of all his brethren.

After this act, significant of his future greatness, David returned to the plains of Bethlehem to tend his father's sheep, and to sing the high praises of his God, as he swept the chords of the life-cheering harp, according to his usual wont. But David did not long continue in retirement. Those inveterate foes of Israel, the Philistines, invaded his country, and Saul collected his forces and marched against them. The two armies encamped over against each other on the sides of opposite hills, leaving the valley of Elah, signifying an oak, or terebinth tree, between

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

them.* While they thus lay, a Philistine of great stature, named Goliath, marched out morning and evening for forty days, into the plain that divided their forces, demanding a champion to combat with him, on condition that the nation to whom the vanquished belonged should become tributary to that of the victor.

Goliath did not readily find any Israelite to accept his challenge. The appearance of this mighty warrior filled the hosts of Israel with consternation. Not one dared to measure his prowess with that of the giant, though Saul promised riches and honours, and even his own daughter in marriage, to the man who should successfully combat with him.

How well calculated the giant was to excite terror, may be seen from the sacred historian's description of his appearance. His height was six cubits and a span, or nearly ten feet; he had an helmet of brass upon his head; he was armed with a coat of mail, the weight of which was five thousand shekels of brass, (about one hundred and sixty pounds weight;) he had greaves of brass upon his legs; he had a target of brass between his shoulders; the staff of his spear† was like a weaver's beam; and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels, or about twenty pounds. Thus formidable in height, and armed at all points, he seemed invincible to the hosts of Israel, and no one ventured to accept his challenge.

Thus matters stood when David arrived in the camp with provisions for his warrior brothers. While talking with them, Goliath came forth, as was his wont, on his errand of defiance, and a thrill of fear ran through the hosts of Israel. The heart of the youthful shepherd alone was unmoved. Hearing both Israel and his God insulted, his zeal was enkindled, and he expressed his willingness to meet the daring foe, and was brought before the monarch to obtain his approbation. Saul at first rejected this offer, telling him that he was but a youth, while the Philistine was a man of war from his youth. But David knew in whom he

* Sandys, who says that he passed through this valley four miles from Ramah, on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa, thus describes it:—"After four miles' riding, we descended into the valley of Terebinth, famous, though little, for the slaughter of Goliath. A bridge here crossed the torrent, near which are the ruins of an ancient monastery, more worthy the observing for the greatness of the stones than fineness of the workmanship."

† For a description of the various parts of armour and arms here mentioned, the reader is referred to "Eastern Arts and Antiquities," published by the Religious Tract Society.

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

trusted. In order, therefore, to remove the monarch's objection, he related, with touching simplicity, the circumstance of his having slain a lion and a bear, which at two different times had taken a lamb out of the flock; he added, with emphasis, "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."

Such a noble display of trust in God seems to have given the monarch of Israel an assurance that his youthful champion would prove victorious, and he gave his consent. Saul, moreover, caused his own armour to be put upon the hero, and girded him with his own sword. With these David assayed to meet the Philistine, but being unaccustomed to the cumbrous load, he put them off, and went down into the valley dressed in the habit of an oriental shepherd, and armed only with a sling and stone.

Michael Angelo, in his painting of David and Goliath, has dressed the former in a Greek panoply, while the giant is represented without armour, and with naked limbs, thus opposing the sacred text. In the accompanying engraving, David is represented in the blue tunic of a youthful shepherd, similar to that worn by the Bedouins.

At length David stood before the giant as he drew near, in all the pride of strength and pomp of war, again to give his haughty challenge. As he approached, the Philistine warrior, supposing him far too contemptible for contest, sneeringly asked, whether he imagined him a dog, that he should come forth to meet him thus. Then waxing wroth, and cursing him by his gods, he bade him approach, and he would give him to the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. Undaunted by his threats and fierce appearance, the stripling hero replied in strains expressive of his confidence in God. He then took a stone from his scrip, slung it with all his might and skill: God directed it, and it smote the giant in the forehead, through the opening of his helmet, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and his ponderous form fell prone upon the earth.

"The gorgeous panoply, the glittering sword,
Served but to decorate the mighty dead,
And in the dust their vanity record;—
The instructive scene, by hosts assembled read,
Still throws its splendours o'er the sacred page,
To teach proud man ambition's heritage."

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

Through this victory David became connected with the court of Saul, and by a series of events, in which the hand of God is clearly traced, he at length ascended the throne of Israel.

He chose David also his servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds :
From following the ewes great with young
He brought him to feed Jacob his people,
And Israel his inheritance.
So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart ;
And guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

Psa. lxxviii. 70—72.

So marvellous and gracious are the ways of Providence ! Truly God worketh his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the sons of men, and none can say unto him, “ What doest thou ? ”

The history of the contest between David and Goliath unfolds to man a Divine Providence in human events, and is calculated to make him confess that human might, wisdom, and contrivance, are nothing, when God is determined to level the haughty, and to exalt the meek of the earth. It is true that the ancients were very skilful in the use of the sling, and it is probable that David had practised the art ; but it was the Almighty that nerved his arm, and directed the stone to the only vulnerable place in the giant’s well-accoutred form. The bravery of David had failed to serve the cause of Israel, had not his God crowned his efforts with success. The stripling hero, in all his movements, showed that he was well acquainted with this truth, and it is pleasing to observe in the narrative, that his thoughts were constantly directed upwards for a blessing. So should the Christian act as he passes through the world, assailed by a foe more formidable than Goliath, a foe who is ever challenging him to the unequal combat, and against whom he must fight, ever depending on the aid of the Captain of his salvation. And he should be incited to vigilance from a consideration of the magnitude of the interests he has at stake. David fought for the salvation of his country ; but he fights for the salvation of his immortal soul : that salvation which his great Captain purchased for him with his own precious blood. If he falls, therefore, oh, what a fall will he endure ! Let him remember this, and adopt the wise resolve of the psalmist :—

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills
From whence cometh my help.

Psa. cxxi. 1.



DAVID BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.

DAVID BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.

(2 SAMUEL VI.)

SAMSON was the last hero stirred up to deliver Israel from oppressors. After his death, the civil government devolved on the high-priest, and Eli, therefore, may be considered his successor.

It has been seen, in a foregoing article,* that Samson only partially delivered Israel from the yoke of Philistia. At his death, indeed, he swept away the flower of that nation; but, within forty years, the Philistines had recruited their strength; and observing it with fear, the Israelites, without consulting their Divine King, rashly embarked in a war with them. In their first engagement the Israelites were defeated, with the loss of four thousand men; and, astounded by it, they sent to Shiloh for the ark of the covenant, feeling assured that under its protection they should prove victorious. But no! They went out to war without the consent of their Divine Leader, and hence they had forfeited all claim to His protection. The armies again met; the Israelites were again defeated, with great slaughter; and the ark of God fell into the hands of the uncircumcised.

Great was the grief which the Israelites felt on hearing this disastrous news. It was the death of Eli the high-priest, and of the wife of his son Phinehas, who was slain in the battle: the one fell backward from his seat on hearing the tidings, and his neck brake; and the other perished as she gave birth to a child, whom she named Ichabod, or "Inglorious;" for she said, "The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."

In proportion as the Israelites were cast down by the capture of the ark, the Philistines were elated. But they soon found that they had small cause to rejoice in the possession of the glorious trophy. They deposited it in the temple of their Dagon, at Azotus, by way of insult to Jehovah; but twice they found their idol overthrown, and the second time shivered to pieces. Nor was this all. Further to demonstrate his glorious power, the Lord smote the people of the place with hemorrhoids, or the piles, and that mortally, while a swarm of mice, or jerboas, were commissioned to consume the products of their fields.

* See "Samson in Captivity."

DAVID BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.

Justly attributing these calamities to the presence of the ark, the Philistines sent it to Gath; and the same inflictions following its removal, it was taken to Ekron. The ark was received by the Ekronites with terror, and, in an assembly of “the lords of the Philistines,” it was proposed that it should be sent back to its own place in the land of Israel. This was determined; nor was the determination made too soon. Already was the hand of God heavy upon Ekron, so that “the cry of the city went up to heaven.”

The ark was sent back, after it had been seven months in the land of the Philistines. It was accompanied by votive offerings. Five golden hemorrhoids and five golden mice, one from each of the Philistine states, were deposited in a coffer beside the ark, as a trespass-offering; and the whole was placed in a new car, to which were yoked two kine, whose necks had never before been subjected to the yoke. The kine were left free to take their own course, and, guided by an unseen power, they took the road towards the town of Bethshemesh, in Judah, which was the nearest city of the Levites towards the Philistine frontier.

It was in the time of wheat harvest when the ark reached Bethshemesh. Its inhabitants were in the valley reaping the fruits of their fields, and they beheld it advancing with great gladness; and when the kine stopped of their own accord near a great stone, in a field belonging to one Joshua, the Levites who were present detached them from the car, and offered them up in sacrifice upon that stone before the ark. Then, the stone being thus consecrated, the ark was removed from the car, and deposited thereon.

How long the ark remained on the stone in the field of Joshua the sacred historian does not relate. Its constant exposure to their sight, however, begat in the Bethshemites an undue familiarity towards it, which was repressed by a judgment from the Lord. Consternation seized the inhabitants, and the people of Kirjath-jearim were invited to take the ark away. They did so, and it was placed in the house of Abinadab, who set apart his son, Eleazar, to take charge of the sacred deposit.

The ark remained in the house of Abinadab till the days of David. That pious king, when he was established upon the throne of Israel, gathered together all the chosen men of the nation, to bring it up from thence to Jerusalem. Contrary to the requirements of the law, it was placed upon a new cart, and, as it proceeded along, the multitude exhibited their gladness

DAVID BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.

by vocal and instrumental music. On that day, however, an effectual damp was thrown upon the joy of the solemnity. The cart at one place being much shaken by the oxen, Uzzah put forth his hand to stay it from falling, and he paid the penalty of his rashness by death.* This event struck David and the people with such consternation, that the design of taking the ark to Jerusalem was relinquished, and it was left in the house of a Levite named Obed-edom.

The pious design of David was soon renewed. Hearing that the blessing of Jehovah rested on the house of Obed-edom, he hastened to complete the design he had formed. Once again he gathered the chiefs of the nation together; and, lest such an accident should again occur, David directed that the priests should now bear the ark upon their shoulders, as the law required.

This was a memorable event in the annals of the Hebrews, and great were their rejoicings. Nothing was omitted by which the occasion could receive the highest honour. Before the sacred symbol of the Divine Ruler, David laid aside his robes of royalty, and assumed the garb of the Levites. With them he mingled, and as they sang and played the triumphant song, which he had composed for the occasion, he swept the chords of his celebrated harp, and danced to its harmonious notes.

In paintings of this great event, David is usually attired in the costume of a Roman general, having a starry crown on his head, and a modern harp in his arms, to the music of which he dances in an irreverend manner; while behind him, and immediately in front of the ark, a rabblement of musicians are made to follow his example. That this is fallacious is proved by the sacred narrative, and by the piety which no doubt must have pervaded the breasts of the monarch and his people on this glad occasion. The bringing of the ark to Zion was an event calculated to take the hearts of the Hebrews captive. Their reconciled Father, their Divine Leader, was once more, by this symbol of his presence, visibly in the midst of them, and although they may have rejoiced with all their might, yet surely it was not after the manner of idolatrous and licentious bacchanals. Rather, it was in the spirit of the sons of Korah, when they sang of Jehovah's favour to the land, and their deliverance from the fierceness of his anger: it was in deep, heartfelt devotion.

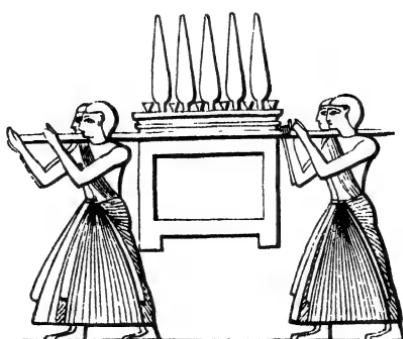
* The law forbade any but priests to touch the ark, under pain of death.

DAVID BRINGING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM.

Under this impression, the artist has represented this scene as one of a devotional character. The engraving exhibits David in the act of performing a sacred "dance," or a devotional recitation, before the altar, while, behind, the ark is borne in triumph to its "rest." The authorities have been chiefly derived from the monuments of Egypt and India, taking only those points which coincide with the Scripture narrative, and using them in the strictest subordination to the spirit of the text.

The ark was placed in a tabernacle which David had, in his zeal, prepared for that purpose. Its solemn removal, and its dignified repose, were well calculated to make an impression upon the multitude, and to animate their zeal for the Lord of hosts. Such dispositions the monarch wished to perpetuate, and for that end he regulated the services of the priests and Levites. This he did especially by animating and instructive Psalms, which he and others were inspired to compose for that hallowed purpose. These compositions have been preserved to our own day in the Book of Psalms, and very precious have they proved to mankind throughout successive ages. They have comforted the mourner; imparted hope to the despairing; healed the broken-hearted; raised the spirits of the drooping ones; supplied the grateful with themes of praise; exalted Jehovah in the sight of mankind; convicted the guilty; and pointed the sinner to a Saviour. In truth, they may be considered as a treasure-house, in which are deposited the richest blessings for the use of mankind. Their sentiments are those breathed by the inspiration of God, and they should be prized above gold and silver. They are thus prized by all true Christians.

The following is a sketch of an Egyptian ark, from sculptures at Thebes.





DAVID'S CHARGE.

DAVID'S CHARGE.

(1 CHRONICLES XXVIII, XXIX.)

DAVID, who had long filled the throne of Israel, finding that he was on the borders of the grave, appointed his successor in the person of his son Solomon. This was known to Adonijah, his eldest surviving son, who, notwithstanding, took measures to obtain the throne for himself. But he was unsuccessful. Hearing of his rebellion, David caused Solomon to be publicly crowned, and, the voice of the people being generally in his favour, Adonijah dropped his ambitious designs, and sank into retirement.

Shortly after this, the aged monarch called a general assembly of the nation, to ratify the coronation of Solomon, and to make a public declaration of his views and designs. Standing up on his feet, he addressed the assembly at considerable length. He pointed out how the sceptre had been assigned to Judah; and in the tribe of Judah, to the family of Jesse; and of the sons of Jesse, to himself; and of his own children, to Solomon.

David's charge was not confined to the ratification of the coronation of Solomon. His heart had long been inflamed with pious zeal for the honour of God, and he had long meditated the erection of a temple, on the fair site of the hill of Zion, where his people might assemble, and unite in prayer and praise to his holy name. This is discovered in his inimitable verse:—

Lord, remember David,
And all his afflictions :
How he sware unto the Lord,
And vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob ;
Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,
Nor go up into my bed ;
I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
Or slumber to mine eyelids,
Until I find out a place for the Lord,
An habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Psa. cxxxii. 1—5.

This pious resolve of David was not forgotten in his old age. Neither prosperity nor adversity abated his zeal, and hence this object formed a conspicuous feature in his charge. After explaining the reason why he had been prevented from carrying his design into effect—because he had been engaged in war—he exhorted Solomon and the nation to erect the temple, according to the

DAVID'S CHARGE.

model which he had himself supplied, and to contribute liberally towards it, in addition to the stores and materials which he had, in the course of his reign, been enabled to provide. His personal address to Solomon is replete with interest and instruction:—" And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.—Be strong, and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord. And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God: and there shall be with thee for all manner of workmanship, every willing skilful man, for any manner of service: also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment." 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 10—20.

In the course of his address to Solomon, the aged monarch gave him the pattern of the Temple, and an account of the gold and silver which he had collected for the hallowed work. But, great as this amount was, it was not sufficient for the magnificent Temple he contemplated, and hence he exhorted the assembly to assist in the undertaking. His discourse was so animated, that his people responded to his exhortations by making the most liberal contributions on the spot, towards its erection. Their zeal was so great, that, in contemplation of it, David uttered this noble and devout thanksgiving to Jehovah:—" Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we

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given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.—And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision.” 1 Chron. xxix. 10—19.

The monarch paused, and called upon all to unite with him in a solemn act of worship; after which Solomon was again anointed king in the presence and with the sanction of the assembly, by Zadok, and David resigned the regal authority to him.

It is to this interesting occasion that both the leading and subjoined engravings have reference. In the former, the artist has endeavoured to represent the aged monarch in the regal costume of that period, and his attendants in the observance of the ceremonial proper to the king's presence. The sovereign stands—“Then David stood up;” and his son and the great officers sit, in token of reverend submission to the sacred authority of the Lord's anointed. David wears upon his head a state cap, and is clothed in a double-sashed tunic, bordered on the edges. The assembly are attired in appropriate costumes, but all of them of a light and airy character, and the dresses of the head are calculated to protect both the head and neck from heat, and at the same time to distinguish the respective rank of the individuals. The authority upon which the artist has chiefly rested, is a seal discovered at Antioch, and which is probably of the age in which David lived.

The assembly consisted of the princes of Israel; the princes of the tribes; the captains of the companies in immediate attendance upon the monarch; the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds; the stewards over all the substance and possession, or cattle of the king; the sons of the monarch; and the officers or secretaries, with all the mighty and valiant men in Jerusalem. These various ranks are depicted in the engraving, and the observer will scarcely fail to distinguish the one from the other.

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They are, indeed, placed therein according to their priority of rank, the royal personages and great officers of state being nearest the monarch, and so on down to the meanest in the assembly.

The zeal of David and his people, as recorded in this interesting portion of Holy Writ, is well calculated to quicken that of the Christian reader, in his endeavours to promote the glory of God in the world. Who can, in truth, read of the lively zeal of the monarch of Israel, and not feel his heart warmed with the same holy principle? And then, the importance of the work which the Christian is called upon to assist in erecting, by his talents and his substance, should act as a powerful incitement to his zeal. It is not simply to the erection of temples made with hands, but to the erection of a temple composed of living stones, or immortal souls. This great truth is too frequently forgotten by the subjects of the Prince of peace. They give; but it is with a sparing hand, and as though it were for a nugatory purpose. But the redemption of souls is no trifling matter. It cost much, even the precious blood of a crucified Saviour, to redeem them; and it becomes the Christian, the man who considers his own soul safe for time and eternity, to stretch every nerve for the salvation of others throughout the wide and universal world.

Wealth, labour, talents, freely give,
Yea, life itself, that they may live;
What hath your Saviour done for you?
And what for Him will ye not do?

MONTGOMERY.





ELISHA AND THE MOCKERS.

ELISHA AND THE MOCKERS.

(2 KINGS II. 23, 24.)

WHEN Elijah was translated to heaven in a “chariot of fire,” the sons of the prophets eagerly sought him amid mountains and valleys, in the hope that he was not in reality departed. Their search was vain; but they received comfort in the successor whom God appointed. As Elisha smote the waters of Jordan, like his predecessor, and they receded backwards, to open a pathway for his feet, they exclaimed with joy, “The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha!”

This was not the only transaction which proved the Divine legation of Elisha. A succession of miracles of mercy and judgment followed in its train.

Elisha took up his residence at Jericho. This was a pleasant situation, but the waters were impure, and the country around barren. Availing themselves of the prophet’s presence, the inhabitants complained to him that the water was unwholesome. Elisha attended to their complaint, and directed the suppliants to furnish him with some salt in a new cruse. Having brought it, the prophet “went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.” Through this simple act, accompanied by Divine power, the waters of Jericho became permanently wholesome,* an apt emblem of the effect produced by the grace of God operating on the polluted heart of man. When that remedy is applied, a change takes place through all the powers of the soul—a change which results in its purification and salvation.

This miracle of mercy was followed by one of judgment, which is represented in the annexed engraving. Removing from Jericho

* This stream, which rises to the west of Rihhah, is thus described by Maundrell: “Turning down into the plain, we passed by a ruined aqueduct, and a convent, in the same condition, and in about a mile’s riding came to the fountain of Elisha. Its waters are, at present, received into a basin about nine or ten paces long, and five or six broad, and from thence, issuing out in good plenty, divide themselves into several small streams, dispersing their refreshment between this and Jericho, and making it exceeding fruitful.”

ELISHA AND THE MOCKERS.

to Bethel, where the golden calf was worshipped, a company of profane youths came out and poured personal contempt upon Elisha, and derided the translation of Elijah, by bidding him " Go up," that is, ascend to heaven after his master. This was grossly impious. It was not only an act of disrespect to the prophet, but a direct insult to the power and majesty of God. Hence they did not act thus with impunity. Moved by the spirit of inspiration, Elisha turned back, and in the name of the Lord pronounced the Divine vengeance upon them, and at his word two she-bears issued from an adjoining wood, and tare forty-two of the revilers.

The object of the annexed engraving is intended rather to exhibit the ministers of vengeance than the actual fulfilment of their mission, which would have involved many painful details. The guilty scornfulness of the mockers, however, and the punishment in store for them, stand prominently before the reader. The engraving also illustrates oriental costume; and another portion takes natural history for its point.

The species of bear mentioned in Scripture, and introduced into the engraving, is the *Ursus Syriacus*, or Syrian bear, which is, perhaps, a variety of the *Ursus Arctos*, or brown bear, produced by climate. Hemprich and Ehrenberg have given a description, in the "Symbolæ Physicæ," of a female of this species, which was killed near Bischerré, in Syria. It was of a uniform fulvous white, sometimes variegated with fulvous; its ears were elongated; its forehead slightly arched; its fur was woolly beneath, with long, straight, or but slightly curled hair externally, and a stiff mane of erected hairs, about four inches long, was between the shoulders. The individual killed was neither young nor old, and it measured about four feet, two inches, from the nose to the tip of the tail. Nothing was found in its stomach; but it is described as frequently preying on animals, though for the most part it feeds on vegetables.

The characteristics of bears are, surliness, rapacity, mischievousness, vengeance, and unconquerable energy. In such a light is the bear mentioned in Scripture to the reader. The sacred writers, indeed, frequently associate the bear with the lion, as being equally dangerous and destructive. Thus Amos, setting before the Israelites the succession of calamities about to befall them, declares that the removal of one would only leave another equally grievous, under this emphatic figure:—

ELISHA AND THE MOCKERS.

Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord !
To what end is it for you ?
The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.
As if a man did flee from a lion,
And a bear met him.

Amos v. 18, 19.

Solomon, also, compares a wicked and unprincipled ruler to the lion and the bear :—

As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear ;
So is a wicked ruler over the poor people.
Prov. xxviii. 15.

The she-bear, which was the instrument in the punishment of the revilers of Elisha, is said by naturalists to be more fierce and terrible than the male, especially when bereaved of her young. In this state, she is adopted by Hushai to represent the rage of David and his valiant men, when chafed by wrong, and contending for honour and existence with Absalom and the rebels who joined his standard. The same figure occurs several times in Scripture, which shows how deeply the minds of the sacred writers were impressed with this feature in the character of the bear. See Hos. xiii. 8 ; Prov. xvii. 12.

In the event represented in the engraving, all this natural ferocity of the she-bear was called into action by an interposing Providence ; and the incident is calculated to impress parents with a sense of the importance of bringing up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," Ephes. vi. 4. They should teach them to respect the ordinances and ministers of religion. If by their neglect, or encouragement, their offspring learn to mock at sacred things and holy men, to violate the sabbath, and profane the name of the Most High, the day will come when they will be called to an account for their evil doings. To ensure their own happiness and that of their offspring, therefore, let parents diligently practise the counsel of the wise man :—

Train up a child in the way he should go :
And when he is old, he will not depart from it.
Prov. xxii. 6.

Imagination cannot conceive the horror which filled the hearts of the parents of Bethel, whose children were thus punished, and who had taught them the impiety which called down this dreadful

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judgment from an offended God. But what will be the anguish of those parents who witness the condemnation of their offspring, occasioned by their neglect or encouragement, at the day of judgment!

The incident speaks also to the young. It warns them not to mock any, either for bodily defects, or for serving God in righteousness and true holiness. Let them avoid evil words and reproaches, and pay due respect to sacred things. A scoffing youth frequently grows up into a hardened, hoary-headed sinner. On the contrary, those who give the morning of their lives to God, flourish like the palm tree and the cedar in Lebanon. As the palm tree brings forth richer clusters of fruit, and the cedar appears more lovely in age, so do Christians who early serve God produce the fruits of righteousness, and increase in the beauty of holiness, as they are repairing to the heavenly world. Besides, early piety has a reward annexed to it even in this world, of which we find many examples in Scripture. Thus it is recorded, to the honour of Josiah, king of Israel, that while he was yet young he began to seek God; and the brief history of that monarch proves that he was hence favoured by the Almighty. The woes, indeed, denounced against his nation for their iniquities were, on account of his piety, postponed till after he was gathered to his grave in peace. Even in our own day, also, examples abound of those who, having served God in their youth with fervent sincerity, have been brought into honour in the world. Forgetting an overruling Providence, this may be often overlooked, but it is nevertheless true. "Them that honour me," says God, "I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed," 1 Sam. ii. 30. There is, therefore, great encouragement to the young, both as it regards this world and the next, that they should devote their youth to God—that they should comply with this his just demand, as their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor:

My son, give me thine heart.

Prov. xxiii. 26.



MANASSEH CARRIED CAPTIVE TO BABYLON.

MANASSEH CARRIED CAPTIVE TO BABYLON.

(2 CHRONICLES XXXIII. 11.)

MANASSEH, son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, began his reign b.c. 696. At his exaltation to the throne he was only twelve years old. This was a dangerous period of life to be placed in such an exalted station; for the thoughts of man are evil from his youth. The rank seeds of vice, which are in the heart by nature, are nourished by worldly grandeur. Manasseh was, therefore, beset by dangers from within and without. Nor was it from a corrupt nature and worldly grandeur alone that this young monarch had cause for fear. He was surrounded by evil counsellors, which, combined with innate corruption and the splendours of a court, proved too strong for his youth. He became so corrupted, that it seemed the special object of his reign to overthrow all the good which his pious father had wrought in Judah.

The crimes of the former kings of Judah, indeed, though great, were surpassed by those which disgraced the early reign of Manasseh. He revived all the abominations that Hezekiah had destroyed; he built altars for all the host of heaven, in the very courts of the Temple of Jehovah; he erected an idol in the house of God; he sacrificed his children to Moloch in the valley of Hinnom; he used enchantments and witchcraft, and made divination by Ob,* he maintained numerous necromancers, astronomers, and soothsayers; he planted a grove for idolatry in the precincts of the Temple; and he made Judah and Jerusalem to do worse than the heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel. Wickedness reigned dominant, and righteousness and truth were, consequently, so persecuted, that, in the emphatic language of the sacred historian, “innocent blood filled Jerusalem from one end to another.”

God, therefore, threatened the wicked monarch that he would bring manifold miseries upon him and his people. His denunciation reads thus:—“Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish,

* The worship of the serpent, which is to be traced through all heathen antiquity, and was, in fact, the worship of Satan.

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wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day," 2 Kings xxi. 12—15.

This prediction was early verified. While the evil doings were transacting in Judah, Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria, was consolidating his power, and making strenuous efforts to reunite the broken fragments of his father's empire. He was successful in the east, and he then turned his attention westward, fully determined to restore his authority in that quarter, and to avenge the loss and disgrace which the Assyrians had sustained in Palestine. He entered Judah with a great force, defeated Manasseh, took him alive, and sent him, together with many of his nobles and people, bound in fetters, to Babylon.

The object of the Illustration accompanying this article is to represent Manasseh in this condition. The authorities for the design have been selected chiefly from the sculptures discovered in Persepolis and the vicinity of Babylon, no remains of the latter far-famed city being in existence to furnish the remotest idea of its architecture, or costume, except, perhaps, the figure of a woman and child, now in the British Museum. The cylindrical seals of the Babylonians, however, have afforded important assistance to the artist. The figure of the monarch in the chariot has been dressed from a regal personage in the Persepolitan sculptures. His crown, resembles in many points a military helmet, and agrees in character with the spear, which he holds in his hand as an emblem of regal authority, and which, at this period, was the sceptre and badge of sovereign power. The chariot is designed from a Persian sculpture in the British Museum. The captive Jewish monarch has been attired from early Egyptian representations of persons, supposed, by Rosellini and Wilkinson, to be those of the Hebrew and Syrian nations. He is exhibited as bound to the axle of the conqueror's chariot, which was the customary mode of treating regal prisoners by oriental conquerors. Such a usage is frequently represented, for instance, in the paintings and sculptures of the Egyptians, and allusions are made to it in Scripture in many sublime passages. The soldiers in the foreground have been accoutred from the models given in the Persepolitan bas-reliefs, and the common

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people dressed after the analogies furnished by servants and attendants, as represented in the same sculptures. The banner, with two tassels, occurs at Naksh-i-Roustan, and has been here adopted to enrich the design.

The season of Manasseh's affliction proved a blessing to his soul. In the solitude of his prison at Babylon he became a true penitent. The sins of his past life were brought vividly to his view, and humbling himself before the God of his fathers, he cried earnestly for pardon, and besought an opportunity of evincing the sincerity of his repentance. His prayer was heard. After the lapse of twelve years Esarhaddon released him from prison, and sent him home with honour.

Convictions in the hour of adversity are too frequently of a transitory nature. The sinner, oppressed by the recollection of his crimes, cries mightily to God for relief from suffering and the fear of death, and promises that, if his prayer is heard, he will end his days in his service. No sooner, however, is the rod removed, and the fear of death abated, than the suppliant returns to his former evil courses, casting the fear of God behind his back. He returns, like "the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," 2 Pet. ii. 22.

The conduct of Manasseh was very different, and affords a lesson for penitents in all ages. On his return to the throne of his fathers, he applied himself with great diligence to the correction of the abuses of his former reign. He abolished the idols he had set up, and so far reformed the national religion, that, though the people still sacrificed in the high places, it was unto the Lord their God only. Manasseh, also, fortified the city of Zion, that "fair place," on the west side by a second wall, and endeavoured to restore his kingdom to a better state. He died B.C. 641, after the long reign of fifty-five years.

The reformation of Manasseh offers a remarkable instance of the power of Divine grace. His early history holds him up to the gaze of mankind as an atrocious transgressor. But his heart was subdued by the grace of God, he bewailed his guilt, and brought forth fruits meet for repentance. Let no trembling sinner, therefore, despair of obtaining mercy. There is forgiveness with God that he may be feared, and Christ is able to save unto the uttermost those that come unto God by him. And this cannot be done too soon. There is no day like to-day. Yesterday has fled

MANASSEH CARRIED CAPTIVE TO BABYLON.

away upon the eagle-wings of time; to-morrow belongs to God, and not to man. To-day, therefore, while it is called To-day, repent. Think of the solemn period when the Ancient of Days shall have passed judgment on mankind.

The days and years of time are fled,
Sun, moon, and stars have shone their last ;
The earth and sea gave up their dead,
Then vanished at the archangel's blast.
All secret things have been revealed,
Judgment is past, the sentence sealed,
And man, to all eternity,
What he is now, henceforth must be.

From Adam to his youngest heir,
Not one escaped that muster-roll ;
Each, as if he alone were there,
Stood up, and won or lost his soul.

MONTGOMERY.

Reader, you must be among this vast assemblage, either lost or saved. Examine yourself, whether you be in the faith; for if you are not—if death should overtake you in your present state, your soul will be lost! irrecoverably, and for ever lost!



JEREMIAH MOURNING THE DEATH OF JOSIAH.

JEREMIAH MOURNING THE DEATH OF JOSIAH.

(2 CHRONICLES XXXV. 25.)

JOSIAH was the son of Amon, a prince who had revived the idolatries of Judah, which had been suppressed during the latter period of the reign of Manasseh. When he ascended the throne, Josiah was only eight years of age, and therefore little good might have been expected from his rule, especially as he was surrounded with allurements to vice, and with evil examples. "While he was yet young," however, according to the sacred narrative, "he began to seek after the God of David his father." He may be presented to the reader, therefore, as an illustrious instance of youthful piety.

During the minority of Josiah, the affairs of the government were administered by the high priest Joachim, and a council of elders at Jerusalem. As might be expected, the regent turned his thoughts to the reformation of the state. He made some advances towards such a consummation; but still idolatry prevailed. At the end of about eight years, however, Josiah assumed the government, and he commenced the arduous task of effecting a complete reformation—of leading an idolatrous and backsliding people to the worship of Jehovah.

Josiah was employed in this hallowed work for several years, and his labours were eventually crowned with success. The altars, the images, and the groves, were destroyed, and the idolatrous priests who burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, the moon, and the planets, and all the host of heaven, were either branded with infamy or slain with the sword. Even the bones of the idolatrous priests, which had long been entombed, he caused to be disinterred and burned upon the altar of Bethel, thus fulfilling the Divine prediction, in which he was described by name, and by which this duty was assigned him nearly four centuries before. See 1 Kings xiii. 2.

All this reformation was effected under the immediate inspection of Josiah, which shows how ardent his zeal was for the cause. Nor did his labours end here. The true servant of God extends his zeal for the welfare of mankind beyond the limits of his own country. And so did Josiah. He enlarged his labours, and exercised a similar authority in all the cities of Israel which were

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at that time subject to the Assyrians. He opposed idolatry, and promoted the worship of the true God; an example for Christians to follow. They are not, indeed, like Josiah, invested with power to cast down the idols of the heathen, but they have the means of sending the gospel to the benighted among the human race, which is able so to enlighten them, that they will be induced of their own accord to cast their idols “to the moles and to the bats.”

Among the labours of Josiah was the restoration of the temple, which had been neglected and profaned. During the progress of these repairs, Hilkiah, who had succeeded Joachim the high priest, discovered the book of the law, which it has been supposed by some was the original writing deposited in the ark by Moses. So much had the word of God been disregarded, and so scarce were the copies of it, that neither the king nor his subjects were conversant with its precious contents. The writing was presented to Josiah, and read before him, and by it he found how far they had departed from God, and to what an extent of wrath they were exposed. This discovery deeply affected the good monarch, and he sent to inquire of the Lord whether the judgments might be averted. The Divine oracle, by Huldah the prophetess, declared that they could not be recalled; but Josiah received a promise that before the day of retribution arrived he should be removed from the earth.

Feeling the importance of the word of God, Josiah was anxious that his subjects should be acquainted with it. He summoned the elders of the nation, the ministers of the church and state, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem at large, to the temple, and there read aloud the denunciations which had deeply affected him. At the same time, he bound himself by covenant to serve the Lord, and required his people to enter into the same engagement. The people responded to his demand, and Josiah, desirous that their vows should be ratified in the most solemn manner, determined upon the celebration of the passover, which had been long neglected. It was observed with the minutest circumstances of the appointment, and with costly sacrifices, such as had not been offered since the days of the prophet Samuel.

This conduct of Josiah affords a lesson for Christians. If the word of God has been found precious to them, how earnestly should they strive to place it in the hands of those who are ignorant of it. This is one of the first duties, and as such it was felt by the poet who penned these lines :—

JEREMIAH MOURNING THE DEATH OF JOSIAH.

Shall we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny ?
Salvation ! O salvation !
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name

HEBER.

The death of Josiah took place under lamentable circumstances. In the thirty-first year of his reign, the king of Egypt was passing through his dominions to attack the Assyrians, and Josiah went out to withstand him, and he received a wound, of which he died as he was conveyed from the battle-field at Megiddo, to Jerusalem. He was greatly deplored by all his subjects, and especially by Jeremiah.

This is the point in the history of Josiah which the artist has attempted to delineate. Jeremiah, habited in the costume of a santon, or dervise, the nearest approach which can now be made to a conjectural representation of one of the old prophets, stands on a mound at the mouth of a sepulchre,* with the mourners of Jerusalem. The mourning women are shown in the foreground, and, as their office, as represented in Scripture history,† invests them with a peculiar and touching interest, great care has been taken to procure a correct representation of them. The authority for them is chiefly based on a beautiful Egyptian tablet, formerly in the Athanasi collection, but now in the British Museum. This relic of antiquity was discovered by Rosellini at Milan, and he conceived it to be a representation of a Jewish funeral ceremony. The circumstances which led him to this conclusion are, that the features and costumes are at variance with the conventional Egyptian standards, while it is free from all mythological allusions to the state of the departed, and from hieroglyphical inscriptions, which abound on Egyptian sculptures and paintings. The attitude of sorrow represented in the tablet has been carefully preserved in the composition of the design, and the accessories, figures,

* For a description of "The sepulchres of the kings" of Judah, the reader is referred to "Eastern Arts and Antiquities," published by the Religious Tract Society.

† See Jer. ix. 17, 18; xvi. 6, 7; xlvi. 36. Ezek. xxiv. 16—18.

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and landscape, have been designed from Egyptian paintings of the period, and modern sketches of the country.

The cause which Jeremiah had for mourning the loss of Josiah was two-fold. He saw that the people would be left as sheep having no shepherd, and that the long-predicted vengeance of the Almighty would soon overwhelm his beloved country. At this time, indeed,

The wheels of an incensed avenging God
Groaned heavily along the distant road ;
And Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass,
To let the military deluge pass.

COWPER.

By prophetic foresight he discerned the mountain of Zion desolated, and the foxes walking upon it, and the joy of his heart and the hearts of the elders ceased, and their dance was turned into mourning, while their hearts became faint, and their eyes dim with weeping.

For Josiah, personally, Scripture leads us to think that Jeremiah had no cause to mourn. We may conclude that it was in mercy to himself, and in judgment to the people, that he was thus removed. He was taken away from the evil to come, and, judging from the anguish Josiah felt on discovering the perilous situation of Jerusalem, death was more welcome to him than witnessing the consummation of her doom. Sudden death, moreover, is not always a judgment or an awful event. To those who serve God in deed and in truth, it is sudden glory. It is a glorious translation from a world where sorrow abounds, to a world where sorrow never enters, where God wipes away all tears from the eyes of his saints. We may mourn their loss, and shed the bitter tear, as they are lowered into the cold grave, as Jeremiah and the elders mourned the loss of Josiah, but they have joined the ceaseless praises of the heavenly hosts. Reader! let us so live by faith in Christ, that, whether death comes upon us after a lingering sickness, or in the bloom of health, we may have a good hope of joining in this song of triumph—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 5, 6.



JEHOAHAZ PUT IN BANDS BY PHARAOH-NECHO.

JEHOAHAZ PUT IN BANDS BY PHARAOH-NECHO.

(2 KINGS XXIII. 33; 2 CHRONICLES XXXVI. 1—3.)

TEMPORAL prosperity frequently proves hostile to the real welfare of mankind.

This truth receives a remarkable illustration in the histories of the kings of Judah. From the date when the people demanded a king at the hands of Samuel to reign over them, to the period when the Hebrew monarchy was subverted, full many of them, unmindful of their duty to Jehovah, worked wickedness, and were punished by the invasion of hostile powers, by captivity, by disease, and by premature deaths.

Such was the general effect which prosperity had upon the conduct and destinies of the kings of Judah. There were, however, some bright exceptions, as David, and Asa, and Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, on whose conduct, in the main, the Divine approbation was stamped. These walked in the ways of the Lord, and “his favour encompassed them as with a shield.” The very evils which were predicted to fall upon Judah, for the sins of their wicked rulers, were postponed for the righteousness of Hezekiah and Josiah — a striking proof that piety in the sight of God is of great price.

Among those who did evil, and thereby incurred the anger of the Most High, was Jehoahaz; and the object of the annexed engraving is to represent his punishment, the circumstances connected with which are as follow.

Egypt had been long consolidating its strength, and at length, in the days of Josiah king of Judah, Pharaoh-Necho, who then ruled in the valley of the Nile, taking advantage of the wars in which the Assyrian power was involved with the Medes and Chaldeans, directed his march to Carchemish, an important post on the Euphrates, and the key of Assyria on the western side, designing its conquest. He passed along the sea coast of Palestine northward; and Josiah, being apprised of it, mindful of his relation to Assyria, he reigning by favour of that power, and of his obligation to defend the frontier against the Egyptians, assembled his forces to arrest the passage of the Egyptian monarch. Josiah posted himself on the skirts of the plain of Esdraelon; and hearing of this, Pharaoh-Necho sent messengers to engage him to desist

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from his interference, alleging that he had no hostile intentions against him, but against an enemy with whom he had long been at war. At the same time, Pharaoh-Necho warned the Hebrew monarch that his interference might prove fatal to himself and his people. Josiah, however, seems to have considered that he was in the path of duty, and he took no note of Pharaoh-Necho's communication. He resisted his progress with great spirit; but he was slain, and his hosts overwhelmed; upon which the Egyptian monarch continued his route to the Euphrates.

On the death of Josiah, the people called a younger son, named Jehoahaz, or Shallum, to the throne, overlooking an elder brother. But the conduct of Jehoahaz was so evil that the Lord stirred up Pharaoh-Necho against him. Hearing of his accession, as he was returning victorious from the capture of Carchemish and the defeat of the Assyrians, and displeased that such a step had been taken without any reference to him, as now their paramount lord and conqueror, he sent and summoned Jehoahaz to attend on him at Riblah, in the land of Hamath. When Jehoahaz arrived he deposed him, and bound him in chains, after he had reigned three months, and condemned the land to pay in tribute a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.* Having done this, the Egyptian monarch took him as a prisoner to Jerusalem, where he made Eliakim, the eldest son of Josiah, king in the room of his father, changing his name to Jehoiakim, according to a custom frequently practised in the East by conquerors towards subject princes and slaves. Then taking the silver and gold which he had levied, Pharaoh-Necho departed for Egypt, carrying with him the captive Jehoahaz, who there terminated his inglorious career, according to this prophecy of Jeremiah :—

In the whole about 44,368*l.* sterling.

JEHOAHAZ PUT IN BANDS BY PHARAOH-NECHO.

It is to this affecting event that the engraving has reference. It represents Jehoahaz bound at Riblah by Pharaoh-Necho; and it possesses great interest from the fact, that although the monarchial history of Judea presents the very finest subjects for the pencil, yet, hitherto, they have been almost disregarded. The interest is heightened by the circumstance, that the authorities, both for the Egyptians and Jews, have been derived from the great historic bas-reliefs of Thebes, which throw much light upon Scripture incidents. The attention of the reader is particularly directed to the handcuffs, or "bands," the military standards, and the chariot-horses, for which Egypt was so greatly celebrated in the days of antiquity. In the cavalry of Egypt, indeed, lay its chief strength; to which there are many allusions in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, and concerning which we have the direct testimony of history. Thus, before Pharaoh smote Gaza, the prophet Jeremiah describes the inhabitants thereof as howling

At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses,
At the rushing of his chariots,
And at the rumbling of his wheels.

Jer. xlvi. 3.

The prophet Isaiah, also, denounced a woe upon the children of Israel for confiding in the horses of Egypt instead of God; adding this significant declaration:—

Now the Egyptians are men, and not God ;
And their horses flesh, and not spirit.

Isa. xxxi. 3.

And when the king of Egypt pursued the hosts of Israel, as they fled from his hated shores, he is described as taking six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, with his horsemen, that he might overtake them, and bring them back again to serve him, as of old.

In the engraving at the end, the reader's attention is directed to the manner in which the ancients were wont to bind their common captives. It exhibits a company of people of various nations led captive by the Egyptians. It has been taken from a bas-relief at Medinet-Abou, which represents the victories of Remeses III., and affords a very striking illustration of the cruelties which attended the actual "putting into bands" of a conquered people. The horrible distortion of limb which is displayed therein, unfolds the

JEHOAHAZ PUT IN BANDS BY PHARAOH-NECHO.

spirit which swayed the actions of oriental conquerors. It was the refinement of cruelty.

The fate of Jehoahaz exhibits the evil nature of sin. For that his inglorious end was the effect of his transgressions, is clearly manifested by the prophet Ezekiel, who thus describes his ferocious disposition, which he couples with his punishment:—“

What is thy mother? [Judah.] A lioness:
She lay down among lions,
She nourished her whelps among young lions.
And she brought up one of her whelps:
It became a young lion,
And it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men.
The nations also heard of him;
He was taken in their pit,
And they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt.

Ezek. xix. 1—4.

Let the reader, therefore, learn to abstain from the very “appearance of evil.” For sin and punishment are inseparable; and nothing but the mercy of God, through the atonement of Christ, can divide them. “Be sure your sin will find you out,” was the emphatic warning of Moses to the Hebrews, Numb. xxxii. 23; and it applies with equal force and meaning to every child of Adam under the sun. Abundant examples of the truth of this may be discerned in the history of the kings of Judah. Sin and punishment, for the most part, made up its sum. Who, therefore, would be happy, in this world and the next, must seek Divine grace, and walk in the ways of righteousness. Hence it is that the psalmist exclaims, in the fervour of inspiration:—

Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the Lord.
Blessed are they that keep his testimonies,
And that seek him with the whole heart.

Psa. cxix. 1, 2.





HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN THE DESERT.

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL IN THE DESERT.

(GENESIS XXI. 14—19.)

ABRAHAM, the father of the faithful, and “the friend of God,” was called by the Almighty from Ur of the Chaldees, into the land of Canaan, where it was promised him that his posterity should become a great nation. Abraham obeyed the call, and when he arrived there the promise was renewed. Still, with this magnificent prospect set before his eyes, Abraham was childless. So years rolled on, during which period the patriarch wandered about in the midst of the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan, or so-journed in Egypt to escape the horrors of famine. At length the promise was again repeated, and even ratified by solemn covenant. Still the performance was delayed, and the faith of Abraham subjected yet longer to trial. His own faith was pre-eminently strong; but not so was that of Sarah. Abandoning all hopes of having offspring herself, she requested him to take Hagar, her Egyptian maid, who in due time bare a son, whom Abraham named Ishmael, which signifies “God attends,” or “hears.”

Before Ishmael was born, the conduct of her mistress had become so trying, that Hagar fled from her presence into the wilderness. Here an angel appeared to the fugitive, commanding her to return and submit herself to her mistress, giving her at the same time a promise that her child should be the father of multitudes. This was doubtless told to Abraham, for the name he gave to the child, as mentioned above, was dictated by the angel. Thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, the promise was renewed with a more distinct explanation, and the performance was declared to be at hand. Sarah was to bear a son, of whom the Messiah should come, or, as it is expressed in the word of God, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, Gen. xxii. 18.

At length the promise was fulfilled. Sarah *was* delivered of a son, whom Abraham circumcised on the eighth day, calling him Isaac, as he had been commanded.

The joy of the parents on the birth of Isaac must have been great indeed. In him they beheld the promised Seed through whom the whole world was to be blessed.

Thus time passed on, without any recorded event of note till Isaac was weaned, which was probably about three years after his

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birth, according to oriental customs. On that day, Abraham made a feast, and recognised the son of Sarah as his heir. This excited the envy of Hagar, who had probably cherished the idea that her son would inherit Abraham's wealth. Ishmael, also, had been led to expect this, and partaking of his mother's feeling, he was detected by Sarah mocking Isaac. In consequence of this, Sarah demanded of Abraham that he should banish Hagar and Ishmael from his tents; and the Almighty having designs of his own with both Isaac and Ishmael, directed him to comply with Sarah's demand, and the "bondwoman and her son" were sent forth, with some bread and a bottle of water, to seek subsistence elsewhere, perhaps to return to Egypt, her native land.

The sacred historian says that Hagar wandered into the "wilderness of Beersheba." Now Beersheba signifies the "well of an oath," or the "well of seven," and it was so called afterwards on account of the covenant between Abraham and Abimelech, king of Gerar. The spot where this covenant was made was at the southern extremity of the subsequent kingdom of Abraham's descendants, the extent of which was proverbially described by naming the two extreme towns Dan and Beersheba, both of which were erected at an after date. The "wilderness of Beersheba," then, probably denotes the desert country beyond Beersheba, and towards the desert of Paran, where Hagar and Ishmael afterwards lived. An idea of this desert may be gathered from an extract, borrowed from an interesting "Report of Travels in Palestine and the adjacent regions, undertaken for the illustration of Biblical Geography." "We now came," say the writers of this report, "to Wady Lelen; and on the north side of its water-course we had the satisfaction of discovering the site of ancient Beersheba, the celebrated border city of Palestine, still bearing in Arabic the name of Bir Seba. Near the water-course are two circular wells of excellent water, nearly forty feet deep. They are both surrounded with drinking troughs of stone, for the use of camels and flocks, such as doubtless were used of old for the flocks that then fed on the adjacent hills. Ascending the low hills north of the wells, we found them strewed with the ruins of former habitations, the foundations of which are distinctly to be traced. These ruins extend over a space of half a mile long, by a quarter of a mile broad. Here, then, is the place where Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob often lived; here Samuel made his sons judges; and from

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here Elijah wandered about into the southern desert, and sat down under the *rethem*, or shrub of broom, just as our Arabs sat down under it every day and every night."

In this desert Hagar and her son wandered till their bread was eaten, and their water "spent in the bottle." This was a situation of such misery as fancy cannot depict, for the inhospitable desert afforded no prospect of a fresh supply. The mother and her loved one were, therefore, in danger of perishing with thirst. Ishmael, it would appear, although a young man, began to fail sooner than Hagar, and needed her support. This she afforded him as long as her agonizing feelings would permit; but when the usual symptoms came upon him—when his eyes became inflamed, and his parched lips and tongue were chapped and swollen—when his brain seemed to grow thick and inflamed, and he was deafened by the hollow sound in his ears—some bushes afforded him a shelter, under which he would fain lie down and die; and then his affectionate mother withdrew, that she might not witness his death, and that she might lift up her voice and weep without restraint.

With the ancient masters, the usual mode of treating this subject has been to place the mother and her son in the midst of a verdant grove of chesnuts, with Italian monasteries in the back ground, to which the outcasts in vain cast their longing eyes; or else to represent them in the costumes of a virgin and child, seated on the margin of a rich stream of water, while they are dying with thirst. These travesties, which have neither Scripture, ancient geography, nor oriental costume for their support, are powerfully controverted in the accompanying engraving. In the foreground, Hagar is seen prostrate on the sands, sinking under the united effects of famine and despair; the exhausted skin bottle lies on the ground, while her sunken eyes seem to be making a last effort to implore the mercy of Heaven. In the distance, Ishmael is discerned half imbedded in the sands, and partly hidden from view by the slender branches of the *Tamarix gallica*, a shrub which abounds throughout the peninsula, as well as in the land of Edom and Palestine. The sky is cloudless and of a milky hue, the light bright, the shadows sharp and strong, betokening the presence of a sun of consuming splendour, and all the accessories expressing death and desolation.

These representations are borne out by the narrative and the physical condition of that country. Every thing seemed to ensure

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the death of the banished ones. But “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” As Ishmael, of whose descendants it had been promised that they should become a great nation, seemed about to close his eyes in death, the God of Abraham sent his angel to comfort Hagar, assuring her that her son should yet become the father of a great nation; and at the same time the angel showed her a well of water, which saved them from impending death.

The sentiments which should be excited in the mind of the reader by this narrative and its illustration, are those of sympathy for the sufferings of Hagar and her son, and admiration of the mercy of Him who looked from his throne in heaven and pitied and relieved them. They are calculated also to imprint one important truth on the memory, namely, That God is ever ready to listen to the voice of prayer. While passing through this desert earth, the invitation is freely offered — “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,” Isa. iv. 1.

Relieved from death, Hagar and Ishmael soon after settled in the desert of Paran, which is a continuation of the desert of Beersheba, probably joining themselves to a party of Bedouin shepherds. Here Ishmael acquired a character in conformity with that which the Divine predictions had assigned to him. “And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren:” that is, he should become wild and fierce as the desert ass — his hand should oppose every man, and every man’s hand oppose him — and he should never be rooted out from the domain which God would give to him, bordering upon the possessions of the other children of Abraham. And so it has happened. Ishmael took a wife out of the land of Egypt, and God so prospered him, according to his promise, that his descendants became numerous, and lords of the deserts over which they roamed, a distinction which they enjoy to this day. The Arabs, indeed, seem to make aggression on all the world a condition of existence. Issuing from their deserts, they make aggressions upon settled districts, and upon travellers, and then retire into their wilds again, where they are safe. Their hand is against every man, therefore, and every man’s hand is against them; whence they are living witnesses to the truth of the Divine word. Reader, ponder upon these things, and admire and adore the prescience and the ways of the Almighty.



THE DEPARTURE OF REBEKAH TO BECOME THE WIFE OF ISA



MORDECAI AND HAMAN AT THE KING'S GATE.

MORDECAI AT THE KING'S GATE.

(ESTHER IV.)

SOON after Artaxerxes Longimanus had ascended the throne of Persia, he celebrated at Susa the general rejoicing, which usually attended the settlement of a new king on the throne. He prepared a public banquet, and, being heated with wine, he sent for the queen, Vashti, that all present might be witnesses of her great beauty. This mandate, however, was repugnant to the customs of women in the East, and the queen ventured to disobey; for which cause she was deposed, and, ultimately, a beautiful Jewish damsel, named Esther, was promoted to her place.

Esther was an orphan, and she had been brought up under the care of Mordecai, her cousin, who appears to have held some office at the Persian court. During her residence with him, she had paid him the obedience due to a parent, and her duty was continued even after her exaltation.

It was, doubtless, the wish of Esther to seek the advancement of Mordecai at the Persian court. This, however, was forbidden by the captive Hebrew. From some unknown motive, indeed, he even advised her to conceal the knowledge of her kindred from her consort. Notwithstanding, Mordecai, without seeking the honours of this world, received advancement. While holding office at the palace, he discovered and disclosed a plot, which had been formed against the life of Artaxerxes by two discontented courtiers, and this led the way to future preferment.

Shortly after these events, Haman, a descendant of the Amalekites, was raised to the high office of prime minister of Persia, and he so ingratiated himself with Artaxerxes that he both obtained the government of the empire, and an edict for all persons to do him homage. All obeyed the mandate except Mordecai, and he deigned not to bow his head to the proud courtier. Haman discovered this, and he immediately resolved to take revenge, and that of the most sanguinary nature. For a single offence, acting in the true spirit of the Amalekites, those ancient enemies of Israel, he sought the destruction of an entire people.

Having resolved upon this barbarous deed, Haman, after the manner of the sons of idolatry, caused lots to be cast from day to

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day, and from month to month, in order to determine the month and the day most propitious for the undertaking, or most calamitous to the Jews. All this time his revenge slumbered not, and when at length he imagined he had discovered the auspicious season, he ventured to propose the measure to the king, and, having represented the Jews as enemies to the state, he obtained a decree to destroy them utterly.

When this fulminating decree became known, great consternation prevailed among the Jews. As for Mordecai, he expressed the anguish of his heart by every external sign of sorrow, and by his loud and bitter cries throughout the city. The report of his sorrows was carried to the queen, and she sent a messenger to him, and was told the cause of them.

Mordecai felt that Esther might become an instrument in the hands of the Almighty to effect the deliverance of her people, and he charged her to exert all her influence with Artaxerxes on their behalf. Esther was anxious to do so; but she represented to Mordecai that the Persian laws forbade her and every person, on pain of death, to approach the sovereign without his mandate. Mordecai replied, that she, as well as her nation, was involved in the ruin, and that, if she refused to mediate, deliverance for the Jews in general might arise from another quarter, while she and her kindred might perish. He also encouraged her to hope that her exaltation had been appointed by Heaven as the means of deliverance.

Thus urged to action, Esther, after having clothed herself in sackcloth, and fasted and prayed for success during three days, ventured, uncalled, into the presence of the king. As she approached, he extended towards her the sceptre of peace, and, thinking that something extraordinary must have been the occasion of her appearance, he offered her whatever she might ask, even to the half of his dominions. She requested that he and Haman would come to a banquet she had prepared for them; and while at this banquet she solicited their attendance at another on the morrow.

Haman was elated by this high honour. He hastened to his house, and collecting his friends together, boasted in loud terms of the peculiar favour. Amidst all this honour, however, one thing mortified him: "All this," said he, "availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

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It has been intimated that Mordecai held some office at the Persian court. What that office was is a matter of uncertainty. Some have supposed, from the frequent mention of him at the gate of the palace, that he was merely a porter; but this supposition is ill-founded. From time immemorial, it has been the custom in the East for officers of the court to wait about the gates of their princes till their attendance is required. Mordecai, therefore, may yet have been a person of some consideration at the court of Artaxerxes. Under this impression, the artist has delineated Mordecai as such, and the view is borne out by many ancient authorities. In the engraving, Mordecai is seated, after the manner of both ancient and modern Persians, waiting his sovereign's commands in the courtyard of the palace, at the "king's gate," while the haughty Haman is deeply chagrined because he bows not his head, nor does him reverence.

The history of Esther has been a favourite theme with painters, but it does not appear ever to have been treated with ordinary truth. The audience-chamber of Windsor Castle is decorated with a suite of Gobelin tapestries of the principal events therein recorded, but these are dressed throughout in Greek and fanciful pastoral costumes. Even the judicious Poussin, whose mind is said to have been so deeply imbued with the spirit of antiquity that he even lived and thought after classic models, has attired Esther and Artaxerxes in the garments of heathen Rome.

Haman, on returning home, expressed deep feelings of wounded pride; his friends advised him to destroy Mordecai, and he ordered a gallows to be erected that he might be executed thereon. His fate seemed inevitable; but it has been truly observed, that man designs, and God defeats his schemes. On the night intervening between the banquets of Esther, the king could not sleep, and, probably attributing his want of rest to some duty unfulfilled, he commanded the records of the kingdom to be brought and read before him. In these records were registered, according to Oriental custom, all passing events, and all the king's own words. A portion of these was read, and it so happened that Mordecai's discovery of the conspiracy was included in that portion. The king inquired what reward had been bestowed upon him, and being answered, None, he resolved to atone for his neglect. He did so in a munificent manner. As soon as Haman appeared in the morning, he interrogated him as to what honour should be put upon the man

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in whom the king delighted. Haman, conceiving that the favoured person was himself, advised that the royal apparel should be put upon him, that the king's own crown should be placed upon his head, that he should ride upon the king's horse, and that he should be conducted by one of the noblest princes of the realm through the streets of Shushan, by a herald, who should proclaim: "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." Haman's advice was approved, and, to his confusion, he was directed thus to herald Mordecai through the streets of the city.

Unwelcome though this mandate was, Haman obeyed, and when he had performed his commission he returned home to relate the occurrence. He was yet unfolding it to his friends, when he was summoned to attend the banquet which Esther had prepared. Thither he accordingly repaired; and Esther now remonstrated against the cruel edict gone forth against her people, and charged Haman with the crime. This was sufficient. As a sign of death to the offender, Artaxerxes arose from the banquet in wrath, and went out into the garden. He soon returned, and found Haman supplianting the queen on his behalf. But it was to no purpose. On discovering that he had prepared a gallows for the execution of Mordecai, Artaxerxes ordered the proud and inveterate Haman himself to be hanged thereon.

Thus, reader, the virtuous Mordecai was exalted, and the wicked Haman abased, by an overruling Providence. Seeing this, let it be your study to seek the Divine favour, and your delight to promote the welfare of the people of God. Live a life of faith in Christ, and you will not only be blessed in this world, but glorified in that which is to come.

The following is a sketch of a Persian king, from the sculptures at Nakshi-Roustan.





NEHEMIAH AND THE SABBATH-BREAKERS OF JUDAH

